METRO/ A23

Carol Jimenez says she's not angry at husband Mark

BUSINESS / B1

Neda chief urges aid for country's battered export sector

NEWS / A5

Jonas Burgos' abduction shows military divide–Joker

SPORTS / A22

RP five makes it to Asian Olympic qualifier

Sulu teacher surfaces to testify on cheating

By Nikko Dizon

SHE WATCHED IN FEAR AS HER FELLOW school teachers and a barangay chair filled out ballots in a town in Sulu in the early hours of May 14, Election Day.

Nearly two weeks after it happened, teacher Darwiza Lim Alfad finally mustered the courage to speak out—the first teacher to speak on

SULU/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, May 28, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 169 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

GMA starts state visits to N. Zealand, Australia

By Tarra Quismundo

ON A MISSION TO PURSUE "FOREIGN ENgagement" as "a central pillar" of the country's economic and security agenda, President Macapagal-Arroyo and an entourage of Cabinet members, lawmakers and businessmen left for New Zealand yesterday afternoon.

Ms Arroyo was the last to board the special

GMA/ A21

On 3rd try, voting in town successful

Armed cops serve as poll inspectors in Lanao del Sur

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Fe Zamora

BUTIG, LANAO DEL Sur—Voting finally pushed through in this troubled town in Lanao del Sur—on the third attempt.

And it took policemen, armed with assault rifles and doing the jobs normally performed by school teachers during elections, to do the trick.

Acting as election inspectors, the policemen kept voters in line, handed out ballot forms, applied indelible ink on fingers and kept troublemakers away. Some even cursed at unruly poll watchers.

As an added precaution, military helicopters roared overheard.

The tight security measures did not seem to unnerve the residents of this town, who came in droves to cast their votes.

The voting also took place in an unsual setting—not in a schoolhouse, as is usually done—but in an old public market guarded by soldiers and two armored personnel carriers.

Voting also pushed through in five barangays in the municipality of Pualas and in one barangay in Lumba Bayabao, where the special elections had failed on Saturday.

Butig, Pualas and Lumba Bayabao were among the 13 towns

ON 3RD TRY/ A20

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
TALLY BOARD
MAY 14, 2007

BEST FOOT FORWARD. A teacher tabulates the votes on the floor of the provincial capitol gymnasium in Marawi City following Saturday's special polls in Lanao del Sur.

REM ZAMORA

GMA legitimacy up in special Lanao elections

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE ALMOST DESPERATE EFFORT OF the Arroyo administration to change the results of the Senate elections into less than an 8-2-2 rout by the opposition with the vote in Lanao del Sur underscores the critical importance of the Senate race outcome to political and economic stability in the next three years.

The size of the vote involved in the Lanao special elections (around 100,000) looks minuscule compared to the national total of registered voters (45 million) and yet so much is at stake in its outcome in changing the Senate picture.

The failure of the elections in Lanao del Sur and blatant attempts to rig the polls can easily trigger the collapse of the century-old electoral system upon which the viability of the Philippine democracy now precariously rests.

This explains why there is now the densest concentration of poll watchers from the Commission on Elections, National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and other citizens' watchdog groups per square meter of ground in Lanao del Sur and why the Army has taken the lead from the Philip-

GMA LEGITIMACY/ A20

ELEKSYON 2007

COMELEC 100% of 154 overseas absentee voters CoCs, 87 local CoCs out of 104 As of 6:30 p.m. May 26, 2007			NAMFREL 179,655 out of 224,748 precincts As of 5:52 p.m. May 26, 2007		
1	LEGARDA	15,525,243	1	LEGARDA	14,088,197
2	ESCUDERO	15,331,411	2	ESCUDERO	13,838,440
3	VILLAR	12,980,815	3	LACSON	11,951,942
4	LACSON	12,917,532	4	VILLAR	11,609,985
5	PANGILINAN	12,350,759	5	AQUINO	11,041,088
6	AQUINO	12,034,025	6	PANGILINAN	11,035,941
7	ANGARA	10,501,724	7	ANGARA	9,648,879
8	ARROYO	9,954,174	8	CAYETANO, A.	8,970,598
9	CAYETANO, A	9,753,877	9	HONASAN	8,966,150
10	HONASAN	9,511,124	10	ARROYO	8,928,756
11	TRILLANES	9,156,933	11	TRILLANES	8,657,146
12	ZUBIRI	9,037,123	12	PIMENTEL	8,398,589
13	RECTO	8,987,491	13	ZUBIRI	8,167,850
14	PIMENTEL	8,956,390	14	RECTO	7,947,766
15	DEFENSOR	8,351,543	15	DEFENSOR	7,492,891
16	PICHAY	8,167,829	16	PICHAY	7,378,468
17	ROCO	7,064,700	17	ROCO	6,543,428
18	MONTANO	6,476,015	18	MONTANO	5,974,219
19	SOTTO	6,304,999	19	OSMENA	5,696,910
20	OSMENA	6,004,463	20	SOTTO	5,584,870

Kiram places 2nd in Marawi; Legarda No. 1

By Fe Zamora, TJ Burgonio and Tarra Quismundo

MARAWI CITY GAVE SULTAN JAMALUL Kiram the greatest gift Muslim voters could give these days—second place in the senatorial race in the city.

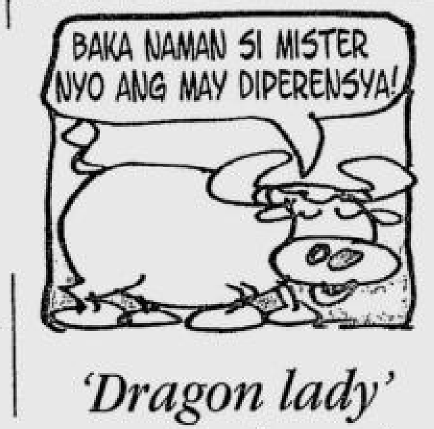
But an adopted Maranao princess, Loren Legarda of the Genuine Opposition (GO), topped the polls in the Muslim city in Lanao del Sur.

Official results of the city's count showed Kiram of the administration's Team Unity (TU) with 22,740 votes, behind Legarda, who garnered 26,633.

The score was 7-4-1 in favor of GO.

Others in the Magic 12 in Marawi were Edgardo Angara (TU), Francis "Chiz" Escudero (GO), Aquilino "Koko" Pimental III (GO), Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan (Ind), Benigno "Noynoy"

KIRAM/ A21



BAKA NAMAN SI MISTER NYO ANG MAY DIPERENSYA!

'Dragon lady' maids feared in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR—A PLAN TO REcruit housemaids from China drew protests in Malaysia, with women worried their husbands would be seduced by the "little dragon ladies," a news report on Sunday said.

Ng Yen Yen, who heads the women's wing of the Malaysian Chinese Association, told the Bernama news agency that her political party had received numerous complaints from Malaysian wives that their husbands had fallen prey to the charms of women from China.

DRAGON/ A21

Kampi to challenge De Venecia for speakership

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE STORM WITHIN THE RULING coalition is far from over.

A top official of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) yesterday announced that the party was mounting a campaign to deny Jose de Venecia an unprecedented fifth term as Speaker.

"The ball game is not over yet," Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, told the INQUIRER. "We want to serve notice that there is a challenge and the numbers will be put in place."

The announcement was contrary to the statement last week of Kampi chair Ronaldo Puno that De Venecia was "an overwhelming choice for Speaker."

De Venecia heads the Lakas-CMD party, which provided the political vehicle when Ms Arroyo ran for vice president in 1998. De Venecia was then the party's presidential candidate.

Asked about the divergence in opinions within Kampi, Villafuerte said Puno's announcement was done without consultation. "But we will sort things out," the Kampi president said.

Villafuerte said Kampi representatives began calling him following reports that it was supporting De Venecia's bid for another term. He described the reports as "misleading."

Villafuerte said the Kampi challenge for the speakership would be a "multiparty and multisector" approach endorsing Pablo Garcia, congressman-elect of the second district of Cebu.

The Kampi president said the campaign was galvanized only four days ago following a series of consultations among members of Kampi. So far, he said, at least

KAMPI/ A12

Padaca fears Malacañang meddling in Isabela polls

By Jerome Aning

WILL MALACAÑANG STEP IN AND USE its influence to decide who won the stalled gubernatorial elections in Isabela?

Reelectionist Gov. Maria Grace Cielo Padaca, whose proclamation as the winner remains suspended, hopes not.

Padaca's camp is afraid the Dys—the family that had dominated Isabela politics from 1970 to 2004—might use their "Malacañang connection" to make sure Padaca will not be reelected.

"We all know about their links with Malacañang," she said over dinner with INQUIRER editors and reporters on Saturday.

The governor, a member of the opposition Liberal Party, called on Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.—who is in charge of Cagayan Valley of which Isabela is a part—to resolve the case quickly and independently.

"I'm here in Manila to wait for developments. I hope my presence would pressure the Comelec to resolve the de-

PADACA/ A13

REELECTIONIST Gov. Ma. Grace Padaca of Isabela talks to INQUIRER editors and reporters. Looking on is Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo.

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern, Central and Northwestern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/27/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

'Politics eating up party-list system'

Militants decry inroads by other sectors

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM IS SLOWLY BEING swallowed up by the traditional political system, leaders of the militant Bayan Muna party-list group said.

In an interview with INQUIRER editors over the weekend, House Deputy Minority leaders and Bayan Muna president Satur Ocampo said their strong showing in the 2004 elections and their vocal progressive stance in Congress has put the administration and other interest groups on alert about the party-list vote.

Ocampo said there may be fewer members of the "progressive bloc" in the coming Congress because the government not only campaigned vigorously against them but also fielded its own party-list fronts.

Ocampo also charged that *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and -shaving) operations were now focused more keenly on the party-list vote.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño, in an earlier interview, identified three prominent new players in the party-list race as the military, the religious sector and political operators allied with the government.

"They changed the entire landscape of the party-list election, where as before, it was only a race by [those representing] the marginalized sector," Casiño told the INQUIRER.

In the May 14 polls, former topnotcher Bayan Muna took the No. 2 slot to Buhay, an organization backed by the religious group El Shaddai. The group's leader, Bro. Mike Velarde, had parlayed his endorsement of mainstream candidates from both the administration and the opposition into sample ballot support for his party-list group.

Other progressive party-list groups like Gabriela, Anakpawis and Akbayan are trailing behind lesser-known groups, some of which are purportedly fronting for the government.

OCAMPO

Many traditional groups have now realized the potential of putting their own people in Congress through the party-list vote, Cariño said.

These organizations, which he claims are operated by administration allies, clearly indicate the government's intent to "dominate the entire Congress."

Some of the party-list groups suspected to be government fronts have been identified as Akbay Pinoy Overseas Inc. (APOI), Aksyon Sambayanan (Aksa), Babae Para sa Kaunlaran (Babae Ka), Barangay Association for National Advancement and Transparency (Banat), Bantay or the True Marcos Loyalist Association of the Philippines Inc., Kalahi Sectoral Party, Kasangga sa Kaunlaran Inc., Youth League for Peace Advancement (Lypad), Agbiang Timpuyong Ilocano Inc., Aging Pilipino Organization Inc. (Aging Pinoy), Biyaheng Pinoy and United Movement Against Drugs (Uni-MAD).

The majority of these supposed administration-backed groups may be nowhere near the Top 10, but they managed to "scatter" the votes, Casiño said.

Worried that the advocacy of party-list groups might be defeated should these organizations prevail, he said that "serious reforms" in the party-list system should be tackled in the next Congress.

"This is to prevent the traditional political system from eating up the party-list system," he said.

ELEKSYON 2007

COMELEC			NAMFREL		
100% of 154 overseas absentee voters CoCs, 87 of 104 local CoCs PARTYLIST As of 6:30 p.m., May 26, 2007			PARTYLIST As of 5:52 p.m. May 26, 2007		
1	BUHAY	992,618	1	BUHAY	510,305
2	BAYAN MUNA	789,416	2	BAYAN MUNA	444,392
3	CIBAC	643,307	3	CIBAC	326,559
4	GABRIELA	469,526	4	APEC	309,655
5	APEC	437,729	5	GABRIELA	307,001
6	BUTIL	392,998	6	A TEACHER	241,393
7	A TEACHER	391,508	7	AKBAYAN	207,475
8	ALAGAD	381,889	8	COOP-NATCCO	202,449
9	AKBAYAN	359,622	9	ANAKPAWIS	176,333
10	ABONO	331,079	10	ARC	155,730
11	COOP-NATCCO	312,670	11	AMIN	155,071
12	BATAS	312,122	12	ALAGAD	148,831
13	ANAKPAWIS	300,528	13	BATAS	145,772
14	AGAP	295,939	14	AGAP	145,585
15	ARC	275,376	15	BUTIL	143,188
16	AN WARAY	255,225	16	AN WARAY	134,774
17	FPJPM	216,042	17	ABONO	132,096
18	ABA-AKO	187,641	18	ABA-AKO	118,950
19	KABATAAN	184,910	19	ANAD	114,230
20	SENIOR CITIZENS	174,312	20	ABS	113,896
21	KAKUSA	169,957	21	FPJPM	108,674
22	ANAD	160,462	22	KAKUSA	105,961
23	VFP	155,856	23	SENIOR CITIZENS	99,430
24	UNI-MAD	154,914	24	VFP	99,416
25	ABS	154,462	25	KABATAAN	98,089
26	BANTAY	145,263	26	ABANSE! PINAY	88,775
27	BANAT	143,714	27	COCOFED	87,273
28	ABAKADA	139,220	28	BANAT	87,060
29	1-UTAK	134,298	29	TUCP	79,469
30	COCOFED	131,271	30	AT	78,375

Buhay on top of party-list vote count

By Jocelyn R. Uy

EL SHADDAI'S BUHAY REMAINS ON TOP OF the party-list race, outshining the 92 other party-list groups vying for a seat in Congress.

With 83 percent of the certificates of canvass tabulated before the sub-canvassing committee of the National Board of Canvassers adjourned on Saturday night, Buhay was still at No. 1, followed by Bayan Muna which was behind by 203,202 votes and Citizens Battle Against Corruption (Cibac).

On Saturday, votes from Cagayan de Oro City, Pasay City, Cebu City and the province of Cebu were tabulated, bringing the total number of canvassed local CoCs to 87, or 83 percent of 104 CoCs.

Gabriela was at No. 4, followed by the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec) and Butil.

La Union delivered

Occupying the 9th spot was Akbayan which was ahead of Abono by 28,543 votes. The latter landed on top early in the canvassing of vote tallies after it received more than 87,000 votes in La Union province alone.

Abono is one of the party-list groups suspected of fronting for the administration after it was identified with President Macapagal-Arroyo's key ally, Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia, who purportedly supports the group.

Anakpawis was in the 13th spot, but behind Batas by a margin of 11,594.

Other suspected administration-backed organizations faring well in the race are anti-left group Anad, which was boosted by votes from Cebu City and Cebu province, and Uni-Mad at No. 22 and No. 24, respectively. However, the latter has denied being supported by the administration.

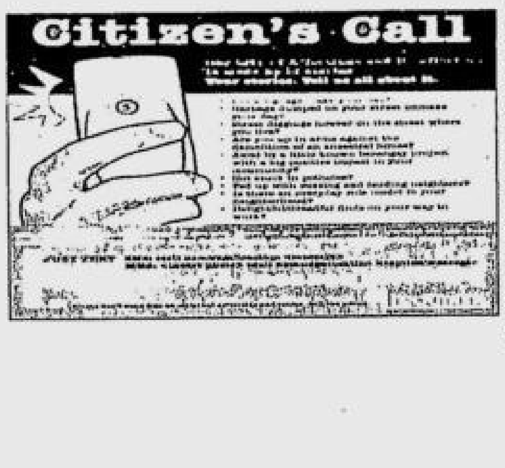
Administration bailiwick

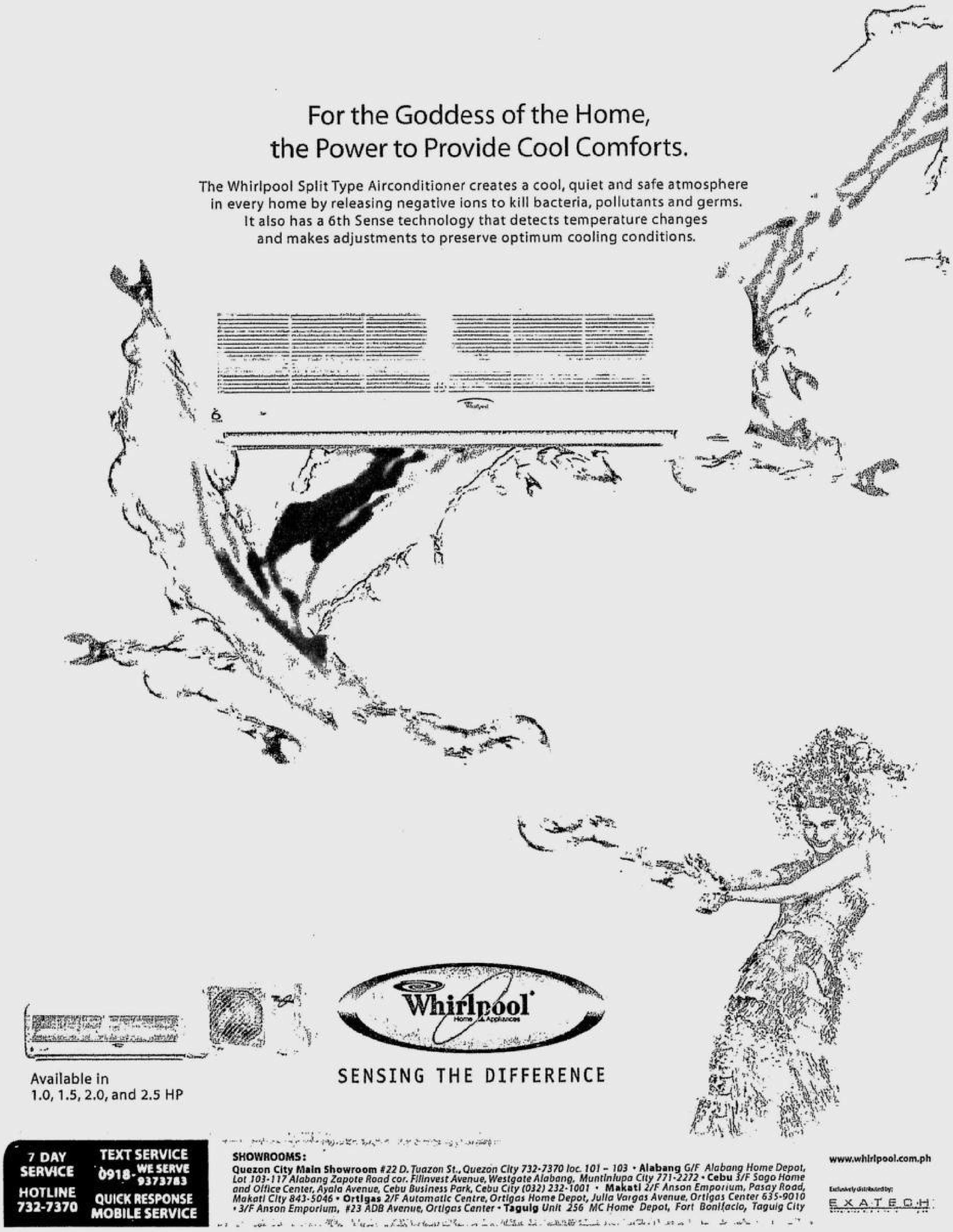
Known administration bailiwick Cebu City and Cebu province delivered 77,081 votes for Anad. The militant group Bayan Muna placed 6th with 25,335 votes followed by Gabriela with 22,460 votes in all of Cebu.

In the tally of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) as of 5:52 p.m. on Saturday, Buhay was also leading, followed by Bayan Muna and Cibac.

In fourth place was Apec, followed by Gabriela, A Teacher, Akbayan and Coop-Natco.

Anakpawis was at No. 9, followed by ARC, Amin and Alagad. Batas, Agap and Butil were at 13th, 14th and 15th places, respectively.


Citizen's Call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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

Goodbye Lipo, Hello Ultrashape!

Ultrashape – Lipo Without The Suction continues to make waves in the slimming industry since its official launch in Manila early last year. Tagged as the first non-invasive breakthrough in body contouring, Ultrashape uses an ultrasound beam to breakdown and liquefy fats from outside the body. Promising an average reduction of about 2cm in just one treatment, it effectively reduces fat deposits on multiple body areas such as the tummy, flanks and thighs.

A small amount of fat reduction is just not worth undergoing surgery for. Liposuction usually involves massive body contouring, and is often not recommended when only a few inches of fat have to be removed. Thus, for the majority of people who only need a few touch-ups, Ultrashape offers a much safer alternative. It gives the benefits of liposuction without the risks or side effects, surgical scars and downtime. The result: Smooth, even and shapely curves you can flaunt even without your clothes on!

Due to its increasing popularity, demand for Ultrashape is high often resulting to fully booked appointment schedules from its growing roster of clients. These women have testified – they have finally found the best alternative to liposuction!

Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo, 38

"When Ultrashape was offered to me, I was excited! Ultrashape concentrates on that last hard-to-lose fat that remains in your body even after you've lost weight. I told myself, at last, there was a chance to lose all that stubborn fat that just wouldn't seem to go away. The doctor explained that Ultrashape destroys the fat cells in the targeted areas like my stomach and thighs. From there, the fat is metabolized and burned naturally by my body as energy. The treatment takes an hour and a half and is done once a month.

Ultrashape is really the perfect finishing touch for people like me who have lost weight but still have some lumps and bumps. After my first treatment, I immediately said to myself 'wow, it's perfect!' Ultrashape definitely has all the benefits of lipo minus the surgery and all the risks! There's no downtime whatsoever. So you see, liposuction is unnecessary."

Lyn Ching-Pascual, 34

"What intrigued me about Ultrashape is the claim – the easy treatment you can have in your lunch break. Apart from that, a friend of mine said that her friend tried Ultrashape as soon as it came out in the market. And she immediately lost 2 inches in just one month! Ultrashape promises an average of about 2cm, that's true, but it's also possible for someone to lose even more than that too. That's why for me, even if liposuction was the only weight-loss treatment available, I'd rather walk up a building 100 times than have an operation because I don't want the possibility of dying for vanity.

With Ultrashape around, everyone now gets a better slimming option. Since it's non-invasive, I've got nothing to worry about. After trying it firsthand, I was like, 'Is this real?!' I just walked in, got the treatment and after an hour, I was on my way back to work again! It's as if nothing happened. The best part was, I could feel my tummy flatten only after a few weeks! No doubt it's the perfect way to trim down excess fats!"

Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez, 42

"Nothing really compares to Ultrashape. When I tried it, I immediately lost 4cm in my tummy after only 1 session! Imagine what a couple of sessions more can do! Diet pills and crash dieting don't work for me. With my catering and events business, I can't just turn my back from tasting and savoring my own menus. More so, if it's lipo we're going to compare Ultrashape with, lipo doesn't even come close to it as far as safety is concerned. Besides, with Ultrashape around, why would anyone still want to settle for liposuction?! I must be very desperate or I must be so fat that I could no longer move before I'd consider getting it done. I just find it too dangerous!"

Undeniably, Marie France's Ultrashape is solid proof that the trends in slimming now slant towards the approach that's safer yet as effective. After going through a weight-loss program, it is highly recommended to continue with Ultrashape treatments right after. It's the best final touch-up in getting rid of remaining stubborn fats in the body. For booking schedules, call Marie France now at 894-BODY (2639).

ADVT

Soldier dies in clash with NPA in Quezon

By Christine O. Avendaño

AN ARMY SOLDIER WAS KILLED on Thursday during a clash with New People's Army rebels, some of them young women, in Mauban, Quezon.

In a statement, the Army's Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) said a firefight ensued on May 24 when troops belonging to the Army's 2nd Infantry Division encountered an undetermined number of NPA rebels at Cagsiay III in Mauban town.

The Army did not disclose the identity of the slain soldier but claimed that the NPA rebels sustained an undetermined number of casualties.

"As narrated by the soldiers, young women were included in the NPA band they engaged," Solcom spokesperson Lt. Col. Rhoderick Parayno said.

"The women were armed with M-14 rifles," he said.

The troops were able to recover an M-14 rifle from the rebels.

Parayno said that Solcom troops had stepped up their operations against the communist rebels on orders of Solcom chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano now that the elections were over.

Yano particularly wanted his troops to hunt down "the NPAs who took advantage of the government forces' focused attention on the elections."

Meanwhile, Army troops based in Masbate are hunting down the NPA rebels who burned and then attempted to bomb a cell site belonging to Globe Telecom in Barangay Lahong in Baleno town on Saturday.

The NPA rebels gained entry into cell site early Saturday by disarming the security guard on the premises.

They tried to bomb the cell site using an improvised explosive device.

In Calatagan, Batangas, joint elements of the local police and the Philippine Air Force arrested six suspected NPA rebels after a gunfight in a coastal community on Friday .

Senior Supt. Freddie Panen, Batangas police director, said the six were in the area to raid the Calatagan police station.

"The rebels probably thought it was a good time to attack the police station because our policemen were somewhat complacent after their election duties," Panen told the INQUIRER by mobile phone. *With Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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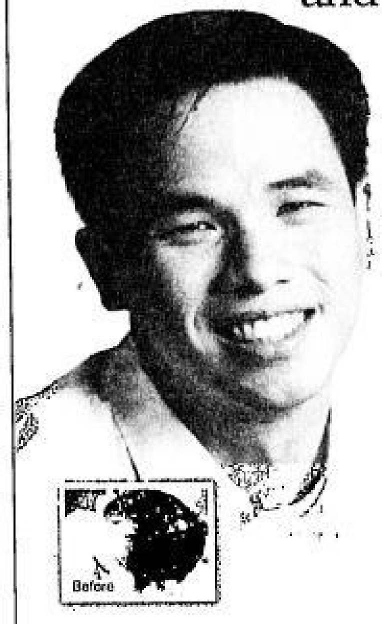

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Jonas' abduction highlights military divide–Joker

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ADMINISTRATION-BACKED SEN. JOKER Arroyo said the abduction of Jonas Burgos, the activist son of the late press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr., has thrust into the spotlight the growing divide between the progressives and traditionalists in the military.

Although Arroyo stopped short of blaming the "traditionalists" for the abduction of Jonas last month, he noted in a statement yesterday that some elements of the military and police were irked by activist types like Burgos because "he preached reform by example to the exasperation of the military and police after some of the affected class, discovering their hopeless situation, sympathized with the insurgents who are fighting the government."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has denied having Jonas in its custody. However, the license plate on the getaway car used to abduct him was traced to an impounded vehicle at the 56th Infantry Battalion in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

The military has also stalled the investigation into the case by failing to immediately answer police summonses. Two soldiers and the battalion commander of the 56th IB are scheduled to appear at Camp Crame only today, almost a month since the abduction was reported, to shed light on how the license plate ended up on the vehicle used by the kidnappers.

Jonas' mother, Edita Burgos, recently challenged the military to open up its camps and safehouses to the people looking for Jonas and other activists who had gone missing in the past few years.

Said Arroyo: "Jonas' case will not die. Why? Because his abduction has brought to the fore the internal struggle in the uniformed services between the progressive, reform-minded, liberal thinking officers on the one hand, and the disciples of the mailed-fist, take-no-prisoners, scorched-earth, attritional war of the traditional military establishment."

Arroyo said this clash between progressive officers (who believe that quashing ideas and reform are not the objective of the army) and traditionalists (who believe that they cannot stand aside while soldiers are dying for flag and country) must be resolved.

"These have to be harmonized. It is overdue. Advanced countries have long done it," Arroyo said.

Arroyo said Burgos' death would not be in vain if the authorities pursue the case and make it a "beacon call for policy change."

"The lesson of Jonas' abduction is to keep it alive so that it will propel the molding of a humane and useful policy towards reforms. If Jonas is gone, he will not have died in vain," Arroyo said.

Arroyo noted that Burgos was not involved in any armed operations against the government.

"Jonas 'is not the swivel-chair reformer—they who advocate and write in authoritarian tones about social reform and who are tolerated by the uniformed services as the example of the government's respect for civil liberties, of freedom of expression. (His type, unlike Jonas) are not abducted, not even arrested, or bothered," said Arroyo.

Arroyo was one of the human rights lawyers that defended Jonas' late father, publisher Joe Burgos, when the Marcos government closed down his We Forum, a newspaper critical of the martial law regime, and arrested him and many of his staffers.

In 2000, the International Press Institute named Burgos one of 50 world "press freedom heroes." Receiving his award, Burgos had said he would rather the award be given "to those who were killed or vanished during those years of unspeakable oppression." *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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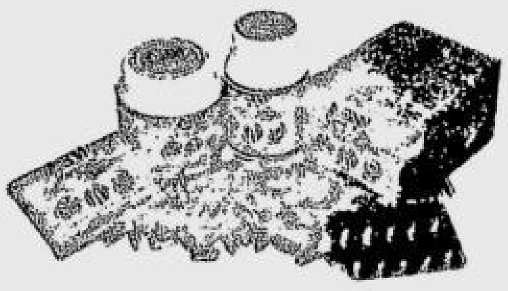

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Keep same public works engineers, new solons urged

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE CHIEF of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Eastern Visayas has appealed to the region's newly elected congressmen to retain the incumbent district engineers in their respective areas to avoid delays in the implementation of ongoing projects.

DPWH Eastern Visayas Director Jaime Pacanan made the appeal because newly elected congressmen usually want new engineers to serve in their congressional districts.

District engineers are appointed by the secretary of the DPWH upon the "recommendation" of the congressmen, he said.

Pacanan warned that a change in leadership in the engineering district offices concerned affect the implementation of DPWH projects because the new engineers would still have to learn what the previous engineers had already mastered.

District engineers supervise the implementation and completion of projects in their areas with their respective congressmen "pushing" for the funding of these projects, Pacanan said.

The region, composed of 12 legislative districts, has seven new congressmen, namely, Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (Leyte's first district); Andres Salvacion (Leyte's third district); Glen Chong (Biliran's lone congressional district); Sharee Ann Tan (Samar's second congressional district); Teodulo Coquilla (Eastern Samar's lone congressional district) and Paul Daza and Emil Ong, first and second congressional representatives,respectively, of Northern Samar.

All the district engineers in these areas were personally chosen by the outgoing congressmen, Pacanan said.

Except for Leyte's third district, there are major infrastructure projects that are underway in all the districts that have new congressmen, he said.

Ongoing projects include the major rehabilitation of the Reed Bridge worth P10 million and the San Joaquin-Quinapondan-Salvacion bypass road worth P89.3 million in Leyte's first district; the more than P5-million nautical highway project in Biliaran; the P1-billion Calbiga-Gatangit road project in Samar's second district, and the P200-million Oras-San Policarpo road project in Eastern Samar.

There are also various road projects worth P800 million underway in the two congressional districts of Northern Samar, he said.

These infrastructure projects are to be completed between 2008 to 2010, an election year, Pacanan said.

Corrections

IN THE MAY 26 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"Atong Ang released on probation"—erroneously described Charlie "Atong" Ang as a former consultant to then President Joseph Estrada. Ang is a former consultant of the state-owned Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

* * *

IN EARLY COPIES of the May 27 issue, Charlie "Atong" Ang's photo on Page A6 carried an erroneous caption. The photo caption should have read "Ang"—not "Jimenez."

* * *

IN EARLY COPIES of the same issue, another photo caption on Page A6 misspelled the surname of the head of the INQUIRER research department. The head of INQUIRER research is Miner Generalao—not Generalo.

* * *

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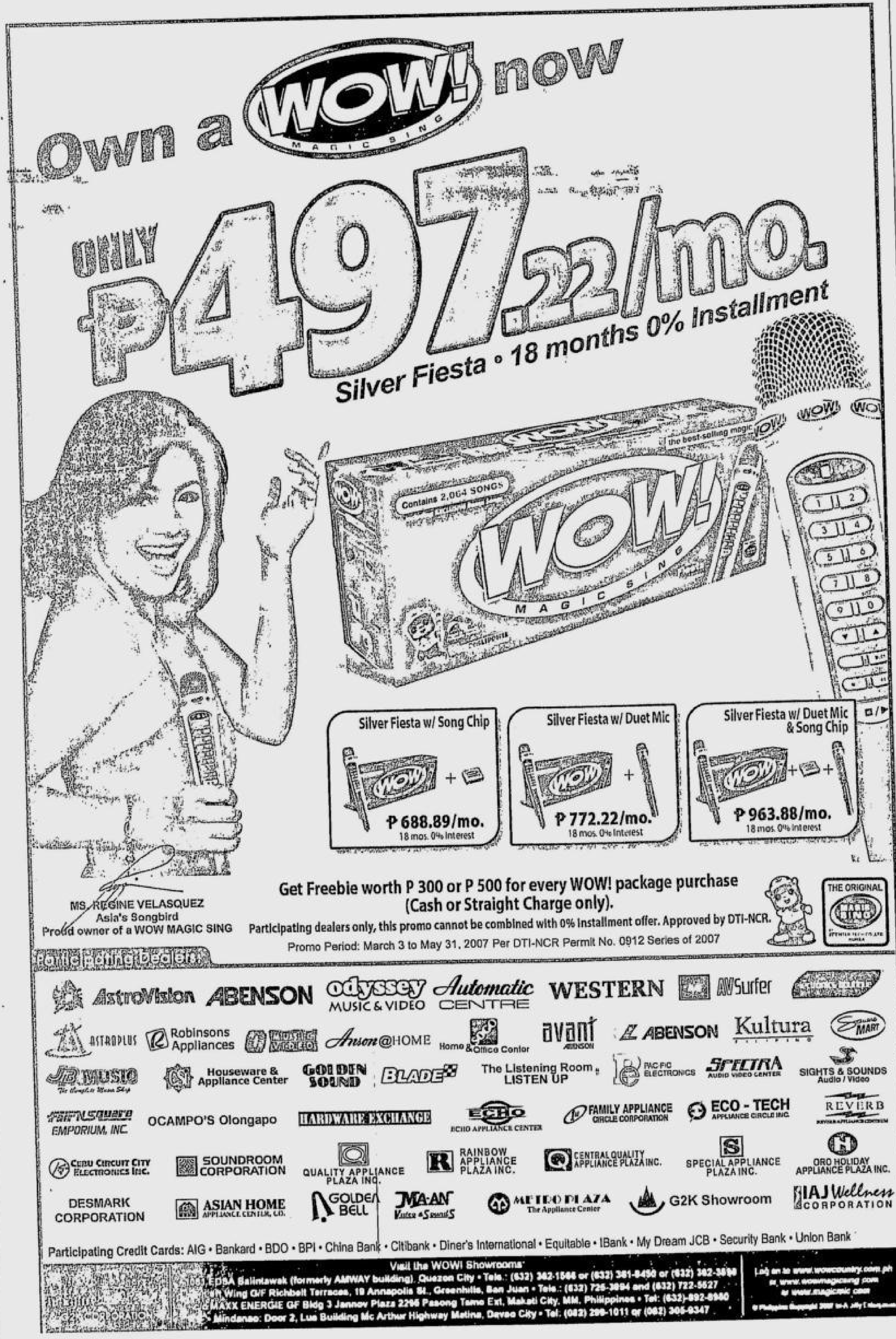
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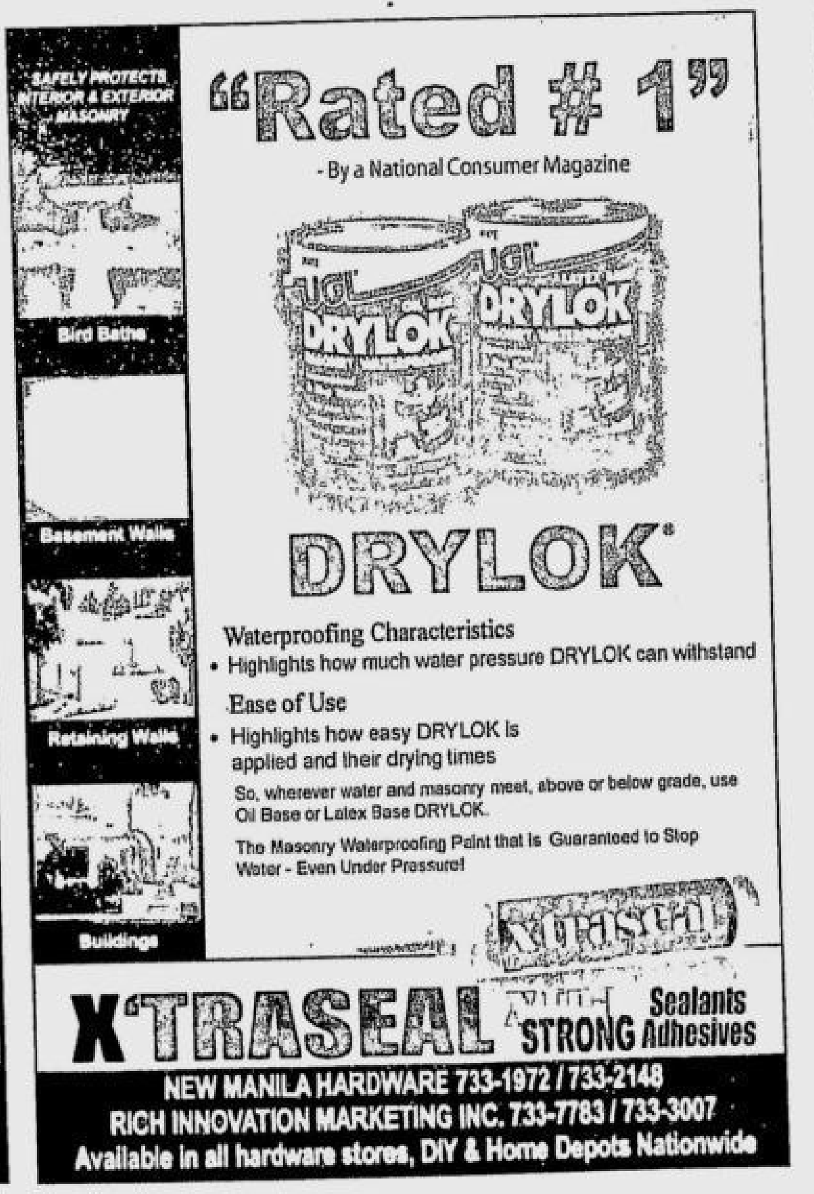
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Court upholds delayed promotion of top cop

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS PAVED THE way for the promotion of a Philippine National Police officer that was blocked by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) over questions of his eligibility and a graft case he was facing.

The appellate court ordered the CSC to transmit to the Office of the President Salvador Manga Jr.'s promotion to police senior superintendent, saying he did not need to take a CSC exam since his promotion was a result of his accomplishments as a police officer in Pampanga and Nueva Ecija.

The PNP recommended Manga for promotion for his accomplishments during his stint as Pampanga provincial director and Nueva Ecija deputy provincial director, including his involvement in the neutralization of the 12-member Bagis Gang, a robbery-kidnap syndicate, in 2002 and the capture of suspected rebels in 1995.

The court pointed out that under the law governing the PNP, two types of promotions were allowed—one for possessing the right qualifications, including educational attainment and passing the necessary exams, and the other for exhibiting exemplary courage and gallantry at the risk of his or her life.

It said Manga's promotion fell under the second category.

"Viewed in the light of the nature of petitioner's intended promotion, we find that public respondent erred in not endorsing the same on the ground that he lacked the appropriate third-level eligibility," the court said in a May 10 decision.

"Said eligibility is clearly not a factor for special or meritorious promotions which, as heretofore stated, are given on the strength of 'acts of conspicuous courage and gallantry at the risk of one's life above and beyond the call of duty,'" it said.

Manga was recommended for promotion by the PNP Special Promotions, Awards and Decorations Board in March 2003. It was affirmed by the Senior Officers Placement and Promotion Board in May of that year.

Then PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane submitted the recommendation to the Office of the President through then Interior Secretary Jose Lina, who was also the National Police Commission (Napolcom) chair.

Napolcom, however, issued a memo saying it could not back Manga's promotion because he had a pending case in the Office of the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan.

Manga appealed Napolcom's ruling before the Office of the President, which said the pending case should not hinder his promotion since it was for meritorious acts. The case would have affected his promotion had he gotten it for educational and other attainments.

The promotion was then forwarded to the CSC for endorsement to President Macapagal-Arroyo. The CSC, however, refused to transmit the papers to the Office of the President.

In the meantime, the Sandiganbayan in February cleared Manga of the charge he was facing.

The antigraft court ruled prosecutors failed to prove Manga, Director Guillermo Domondon and the late PNP chief Cesar Nazareno were involved in the ghost purchase of P20 million worth of police equipment in 1992.

Manga's defense was that his signature was forged on the document that made it appear he received P20.16 million in cash from three other officers. He said he was out of town when the document was signed and his middle initial was wrong.

Nazareno and Domondon were cleared because there was no evidence to show they had directly participated in preparing the vouchers for the P20.16 million.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 28, 2007
8th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 17:20-24
Gospel: Mark 10:17-27

Just as Jesus was setting out on his journey again, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked, "Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not cheat, honor your father and mother." The man replied, "I have obeyed all these commandments since my childhood."

Then Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him and he said, "For you, one thing is lacking. Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me." On hearing these words, his face fell and he went away sorrowful for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were shocked at these words, but Jesus insisted, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

They were more astonished than ever and wondered, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus looked steadily at them and said, "For humans it is impossible, but not for God; all things are possible with God."

Commentary

The book of Sirach is wisdom literature, small pieces culled from around the time of Solomon and specific to Jewish schools of thought. Each piece is almost separate and can be taken at face value—and much of it isn't wisdom at all, but cultural beliefs. It should be read through the lens of Jesus' words in the gospels and the understanding of the Spirit in community. Here is the best of this segment: how great is the mercy of the Lord!

Back to Mark's gospel, Jesus is met by a man who wants a share in everlasting life and calls Jesus 'good'. Jesus says that only God is good—our terms are relative at best. And what gives life is obedience to the law, which the man says he obeys. He is looked at with love and told there is one more thing—go sell what you have, give to the poor and then come follow Jesus. If we are to become Jesus' followers we too must go beyond the law, towards living the poverty, the generosity, and the sharing of the kingdom.

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Global trends in English at Ateneo

THE DEPARTMENT of English of the Ateneo de Manila University, in cooperation with The British and English Speaking Union Philippines, will host a lecture-discussion on "Global Trends in English Language Learning" from 3 to 5 p.m. on June 4.

The lecture will be conducted by David Graddol, a British applied linguist, writer, broadcaster, researcher and consultant on issues relating to global English.

His research on the development of English has resulted in the publication by the British Council of his two books: The Future of English? (1997), which helped establish a new agenda and framework for understanding the international development of English; and English Next (2006), a follow-up analysis of global trends in English language learning.

The lecture will be held at the Ching Tan Room (SOM 111), John Gokongwei School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Admission is free. For more information, please call Jossie Lacson, tel. 426-6120 or 426-6001, ext. 5310 or 5311, or e-mail doe@admu.edu.ph.

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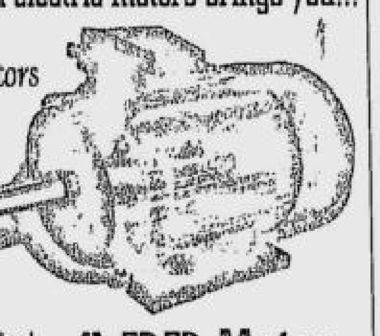

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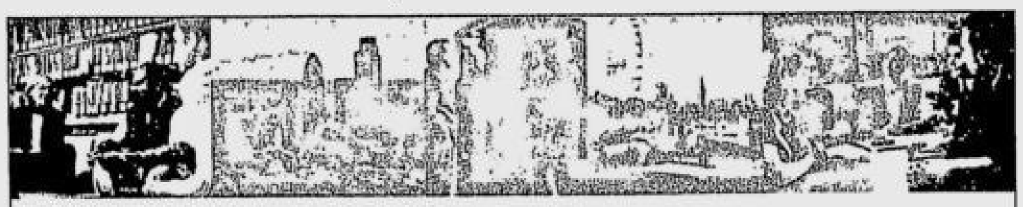

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EALING LAW SCHOOL PRESENTATION AND INTERVIEW SESSION
Dr. Mark Hsiao will be conducting a presentation and an interview session on the above topic in Manila on Saturday, 2 June 2007.

PRESENTATION
Date: Saturday, 02 June 2007
Time: 10am
Venue: The British Council
10 F Taipan Place Emerald Ave
Ortigas Centre, Pasig City
T: 914 1011
E: educationuk@britishcouncil.org.ph

INTERVIEW SESSION
Date: Saturday, 02 June 2007
Time: 2pm - 5pm
Venue: Study International
UG36 Alfaro Place, 146 LP Leviste Street
Salcedo Village, Makati City
T: 8178090 / 0920 9519857
E: dianne@studyinternational.com.ph
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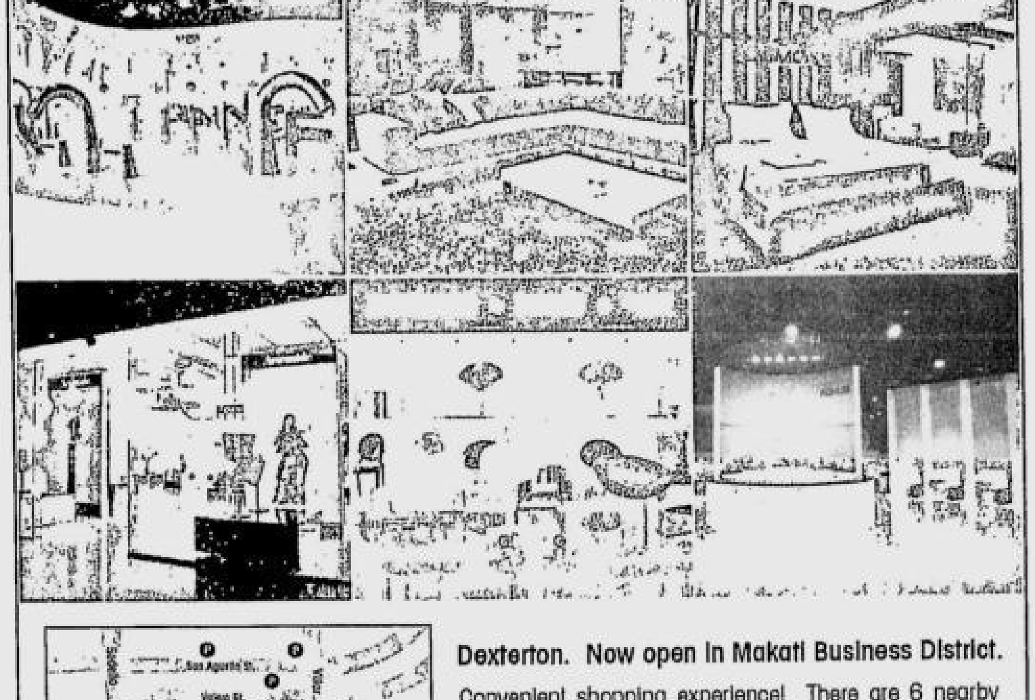

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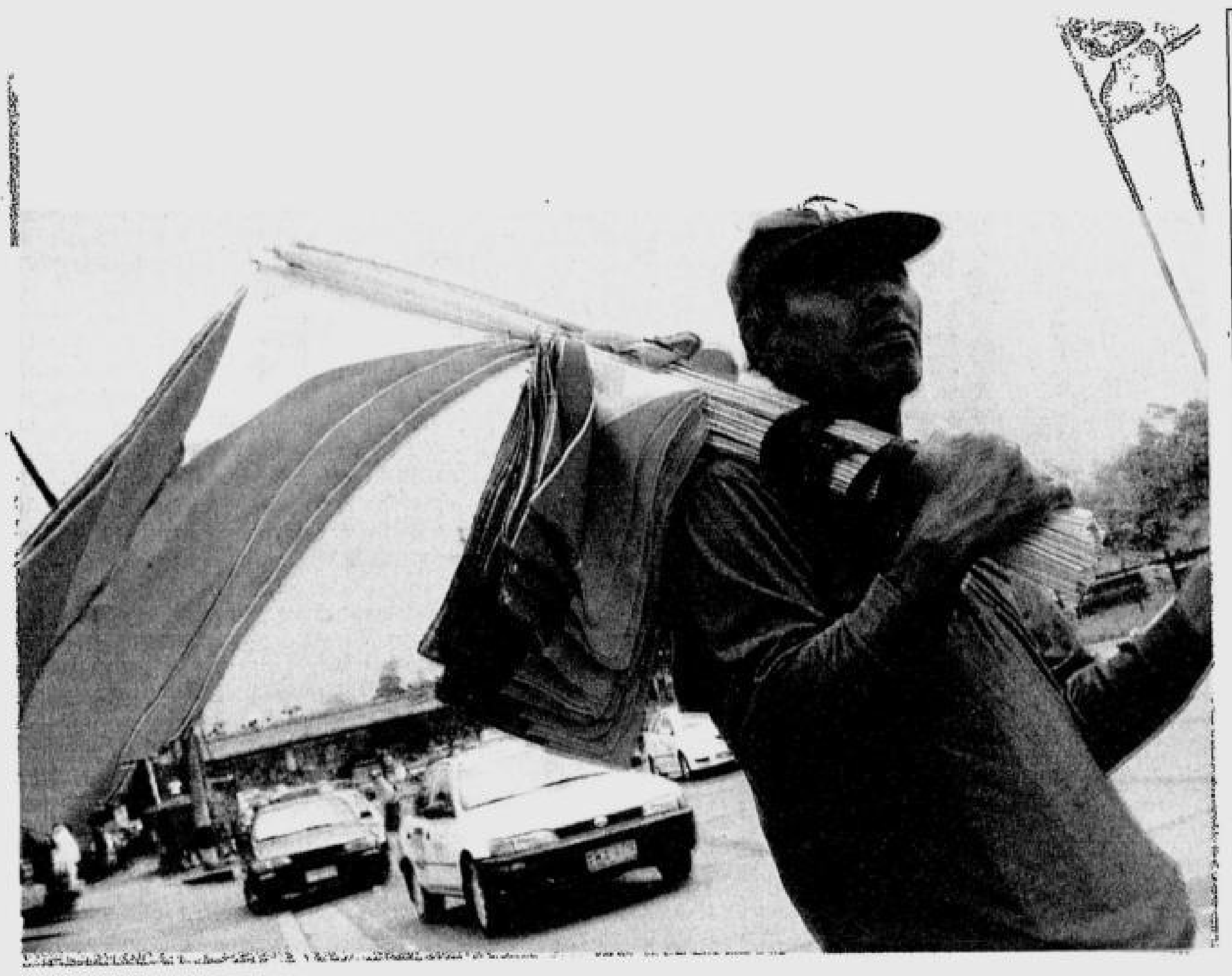

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With a little over two weeks till Independence Day on June 12, Philippine flags of the sizes one can display on their vehicle have started making their appearance on the streets. Arsenio Santos, 51, of Divisoria, Manila, hawks the colors at Philcoa in Quezon City. Santos has been selling Philippine flags since 1995. ROMY HOMILLADA

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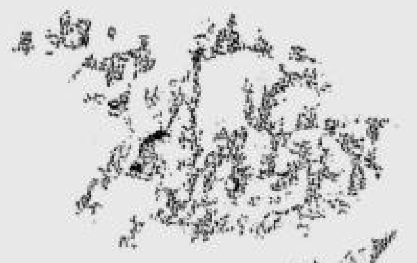

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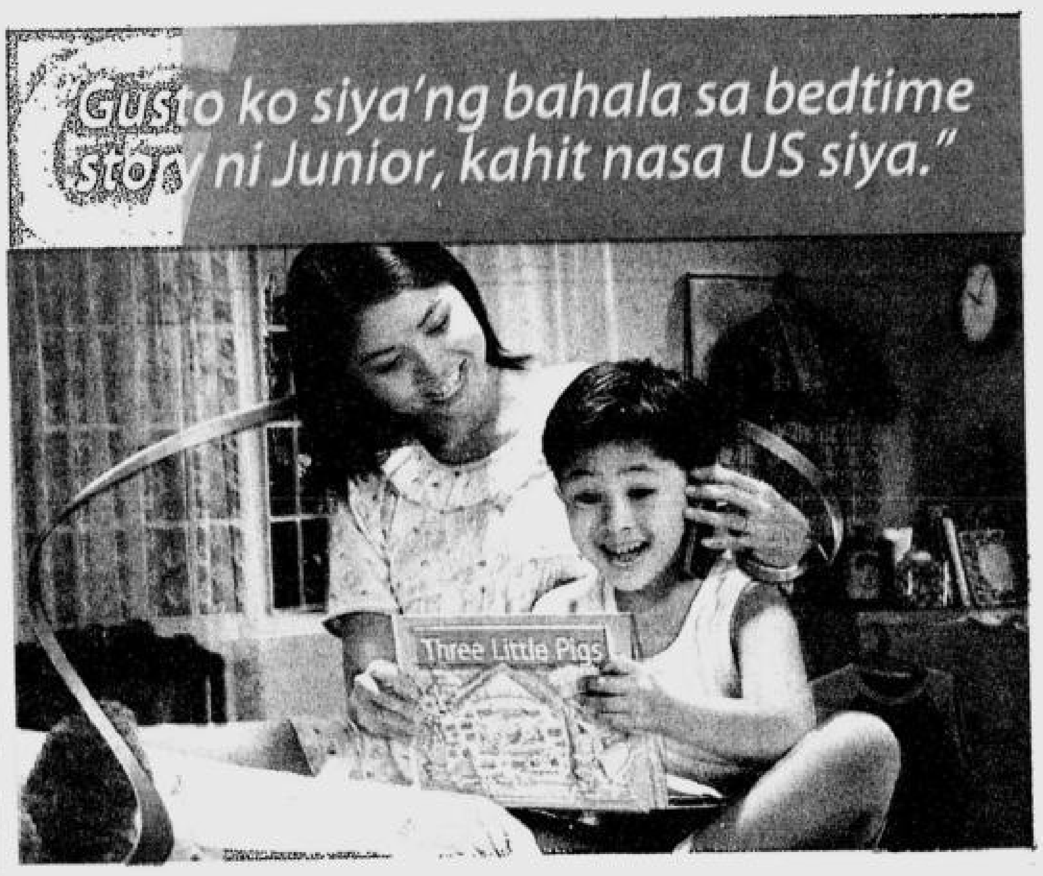

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After losing tree, lensman guards acacia with his life

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—This time, he would not allow it to be cut.

Zambales-based photographer Arthur Earl Dumaguing has been guarding his acacia tree with his life since Thursday.

Dumaguing, 40, his wife Eden and their children are taking turns watching over the tree, not wanting it to suffer the fate of their 14-year-old eucalyptus tree.

The eucalyptus was ordered cut by Art Galto, an employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, without the permission of Dumaguing who planted the tree in 1992.

Eden, a teacher, said she saw Galto supervising the cutting of the eucalyptus on Thursday. Galto, she said, declined to identify himself or show a permit when she confronted him.

"He instead went back to drinking beer with the uncle-in-law of our new neighbor," she said.

Per Dumaguing's account, Galto told him in a phone conversion on Friday that he cut the tree on the request of the uncle-in-law of Dumaguing's American neighbor in Barangay del Pilar in Castillejos town.

The uncle-in-law, Galto said, claimed to be the owner of the tree, not Dumaguing.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Galto for comment on Sunday.

Violation

Regidor de Leon, DENR executive director in Central Luzon, has placed Galto under investigation for possible violation of tree-cutting protocols.

"Galto did not exercise due diligence [by checking on the rightful owner]. I planted the tree in 1992. The seedling came from an environment seminar that I attended at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (Laguna). I planted it because Zambales was so gloomy after Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions [in June 1991] and because I wanted it to provide shade to our house," Dumaquing told the INQUIRER.

He planted the tree across from his house, along the national highway.

The problem, according to Dumaquing, began in March when his neighbor asked the Zambales Electric Cooperative (Zameco) II to put up an electric post beside the tree.

"I warned the workers not to do that because the branches would obstruct the cables. I advised them to instead put the post in front of the neighbor's yard because there were no trees there," he said.

His plea, however, was ignored.

Dumaguing then consulted a DENR employee who assured him the tree would not be cut because there were standard protocols for doing that.

He said his fears were assuaged by the thought the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways would protect the tree since these agencies had a joint tree-planting program along major highways.

Zameco II and the DENR also had an agreement to prune tree branches, not cut down trees, he said.

But the agreements, he later learned, were not enough to save the eucalyptus tree.

"Galto unilaterally sentenced my tree to death. And I fear losing my acacia since my neighbor reportedly does not want it there because the leaves are damaging the roof of his Internet café," he said.

His neighbor's uncle-in-law went to see Eden on Saturday to give her P700 as payment for damages. Eden refused the money.

Dumaguing also refused the log from the felled eucalyptus.

"*Sasama lang ang loob ko* (It will only hurt me more)," he said.

On Sunday, the Filipino wife of his American neighbor came to Dumaguing's house and apologized for the incident. She blamed her uncle for what happened.

Cotabato tillers get UN rice

KIDAPAWAN CITY—The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has pledged to provide an eight-month rice supply to families of some 200 farmers in North Cotabato who are engaged in livestock-raising.

"We want to ensure that poor farmers in the livestock industry get the rice subsidy they need for the next eight months," said WFP Deputy Country Director Alghassim Wurie in a recent meeting with provincial government officials here.

Lita Enok, civil defense director for Central Mindanao, said some 10,000 bags of rice were now available for distribution to the farmers who are beneficiaries of the goat and cattle-raising program of the provincial government.

The World Food Programme is the UN agency responsible for food assistance to countries suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

Gov. Emmanuel Piño said the provincial government will provide farmers belonging to "the poorest of the poor" with imported goats (four females, one male).

Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

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Boracay promotes Visayan products

BORACAY—SMALL- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in the Visayas got a big boost when they showed off their products on this island last week.

Some 100 SME producers from Western, Central and Eastern Visayas displayed the best products of their regions in the 2nd One Town One Product (OTOP) Fair held here on May 23-27.

The venue was La Carmela Resort and the beach front which gave local and foreign tourists the chance to examine and buy the products.

Heart of tourism

Dominic Abad, Western Visayas director of the Department of Trade and Industry, said this year's OTOP was held on Boracay because it is the heart of the country's tourism industry.

Abad said this year's fair was prompted by the success of the 1st OTOP Fair held in Cebu last year which grossed P4 million in sales and introduced the producers to new markets and buyers.

The producers also hoped to get stores on Boracay that cater to half a million tourists a year to sell their products.

Investments

Cerge Remonde, director general of the Presidential Management Staff and Cabinet oversight official for the development of SMEs, said in his speech opening the fair that OTOP would not only showcase products from the Visayas but stimulate investment in the region.

Remonde said the government had provided P159.8 billion in loans to around 2.6 million SMEs.

The OTOP concept is the Philippine adaptation of the successful One Village One Product project implemented by Japan in 1979 in Oita Prefecture. Its success prompted other countries to adopt the idea.

Started in the country in 2004, OTOP has generated P3.2-billion worth of investments and created 142,227 jobs. It has also developed 3,589 new SMEs, the DTI said.

Some 1,240 municipal and provincial OTOP products have been accredited by the DTI and 10 regions are now exporting OTOP products. *Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas Bureau*

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STI and ABS-CBN:

A Powerful Partnership for the Filipino Youth

Once again, STI and ABS-CBN has empowered the Filipino youth to participate in shaping the course of the nation through Halalan 2007.

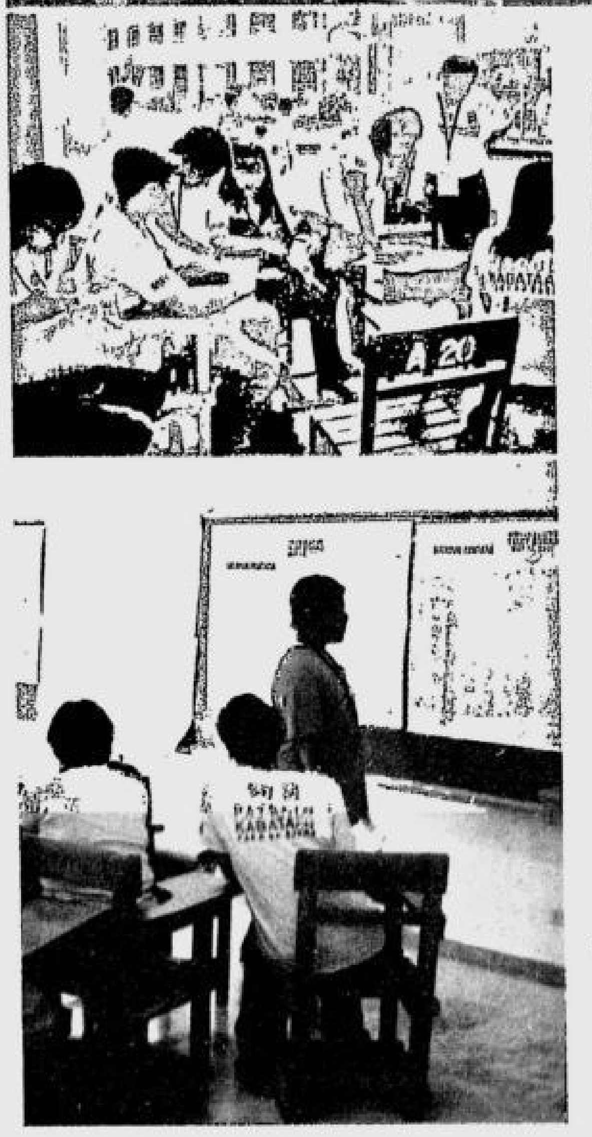
STI and ABS-CBN, for the 4th time since the partnership was established during the 1998 National Elections, has again brought the largest and most comprehensive election coverage in the country.

The coverage was highlighted by the ABS-CBN and STI Media Count, where over 14,000 student volunteers from STI were assigned in over 22,000 precincts nationwide to provide by-the-hour partial election returns from May 14 to May 15.

By providing another venue for the youth to be involved in nation-building, STI and ABS-CBN shall continue to encourage young and enlightened students in laying the groundwork for positive change in the country.

STI ABS-CBN Halalan '07
PATROL KABATAAN

Student Volunteers in Action



A Salute to Our Young Heroes

The 14,000-strong student volunteers of STI displayed a keen sense of responsibility -- taking on the arduous task of monitoring election returns last May 14 and into the early hours of May 15, spread in over 22,000 precincts nationwide.

Dismissing fatigue, the grueling summer heat, lack of sleep and forgoing a relaxing day at home on a national holiday, the STI student volunteers made a difference by choosing to be active participants in Halalan 2007.

The student volunteers admit to the difficulties they encountered going from one busy and crowded classroom to another to monitor partial election returns for more than 12 hours straight, but they are one in saying that their efforts were well worth it.

Being an STI student volunteer entails fulfilling a noble duty towards the country – and it is welcomed by the young volunteers as a chance to strengthen nationalism and demonstrate their commitment towards building better futures for generations to come.

DE VENECIA

VILLAFUERTE

PUNO

GARCIA

Kampi to challenge De Venecia for speakership

From page A1

41 Kampi representatives had promised to support Garcia.

The ruling coalition in the House is composed of Lakas-CMD, Kampi, the Nationalist People's Coalition, the Liberal Party-Lito Atienza group, Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

Before the start of the campaign for the midterm elections, Kampi was accused of raiding the ranks of Lakas. In a number of areas, such as Pampanga, Lakas and Kampi candidates competed against each other.

Supporters

A separate statement released by Villafuerte yesterday rattled off the names of lawmakers who purportedly support a new House leadership.

He said seven other representatives from Garcia's province were backing the Kampi campaign, including Antonio Cuenco of Lakas and Eduardo Gullas and Narissa Soon-Ruiz of Kampi.

Villafuerte said eight more lawmakers from Eastern Visayas, led by Martin Romualdez of Leyte, had promised to support Garcia. He said Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis had identified at least eight other supporters from Bicol.

Rep. Antonio Cerilles (NPC) promised to convince his partymates to back the Kampi campaign against De Venecia, according to Villafuerte.

"This is just the beginning," the Kampi president said in a phone interview. "There will be more surprises. There will even be congressmen from the opposition who will support us."

Chamber change

In making a pitch for a new Speaker, Villafuerte said "Chamber change—not Charter change—is the immediate clamor at this time."

But Villafuerte would not categorically say if a Kampi leadership in the House would shelve efforts to amend the Constitution.

De Venecia, one of the prime movers of Charter change in the House, pushed for a constituent assembly (Con-Ass) after the signature campaign by Sigaw ng Bayan to amend the Constitution was defeated in the Supreme Court last year.

De Venecia abandoned Con-Ass only when the Catholic Church and other sectors vowed to stage nationwide protests against it.

In Con-Ass, members of the House and senators amend the Constitution.

"We don't want to clutter the legislative process with the issue of Charter change at this time," Villafuerte said. "We just had an election."

Allocation of committees

In his statement, Villafuerte said a new House leadership would give priority to the following:

- Fair and equitable allocation of chairmanships and memberships in congressional committees.
- Formation of guidelines in the management of bills and resolutions in the committee and plenary sessions for an efficient movement of the legislative mill.
- Establishment of an arrangement with the Senate to ensure the passage of bills both for local and national applications.
- Workable mechanism with the opposition to ensure the reenactment of bills that were approved in the previous Congress but were not acted upon by the Senate.
- Activation of the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) to promote consensus in the passage of priority bills. Majority and minority parties will be represented in Ledac.
- Incentives for outstanding attendance and disincentives for absences by lawmakers.

‘She’s fearless, a perfectionist … and guys may be intimidated’

By Jerome Aning
in Manila
and Villamor Visaya Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

PEOPLE KNOW HER AS THE RADIO broadcaster who toppled a political dynasty in Isabela despite her lack of money and machinery.

But does anyone know Gov. Maria Grace Cielo Padaca as a woman in love?

Blushing and giggling like a teenager, Padaca revealed over dinner with INQUIRER editors and reporters on Saturday that she has a prospective suitor.

“No, it’s not yet a relationship,” she said when pressed for details. She admitted that he was not in government.

When asked if Isabela folk could expect to hear wedding bells during her second term, Padaca started to laugh and said: “It would have been easier for me [to have a suitor] had I not won a second term.”

At this point, the governor decided to keep mum. “I don’t want to speak anymore. *Baka maudlot* (It might get jinxed),” she said, smiling.

In a 2004 interview with the INQUIRER, Padaca said she had entertained thoughts of finding a lifetime partner and getting married.

“*Sana biglang ganoon* (How I wish that would happen). However, it seems no one is left for me, because at my age (she was then 40), only married men and gays are available,” she said.

Padaca’s position as governor, her academic and professional backgrounds, and quite possibly her disability, are factors that have turned away potential suitors.

“She is beautiful and lovely. There must be something there that guys are afraid of,” said Isabela Vice Gov. Ramon Reyes, Padaca’s close ally.

Maria Theresa Araneta-Flores, acting provincial treasurer and a close friend of Padaca’s, had this explanation: “She is brilliant, fearless and a perfectionist… this may be why guys are intimidated.”

Flores and Padaca worked at Bombo Radyo-dzNC in the early 1990s as station manager and assistant station manager, respectively.

Flores said she considers her friendship with Padaca a blessing.

“We’re like sisters because we have a lot of things in common—[we like the same] music, [admire the same] celebrities, [follow the same] fads,” she said. “She is *kikay* (flirtatious) like me but she is sweet, thoughtful and appreciative.”

Gloria Cecilia Franco, provincial government executive assistant and Padaca’s closest aide, described the governor as “very secretive,” especially when it came to her personal life.

Franco, however, said Padaca was “very fair” and did not give special treatment to her friends.

Robert Plata, a former Bombo Radyo reporter who had worked with Padaca, described the governor as a perfectionist and a workaholic.

Padaca was born on Oct. 25, 1963, to schoolteachers Bernardo and Amelia Padaca in Naguilian, Isabela.

Though handicapped, Padaca excelled in school and graduated valedictorian from Cauayan South Central School in 1976 and from the Our Lady of the Pillar Institute in 1980, both in Cauayan City.

She later obtained a business administration degree, magna cum laude, from the Lyceum of the Philippines in Manila in 1984. She became a certified public accountant in 1985 after passing the board exams.

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Padaca fears …

From page A1

lay in my proclamation,” she said.

Padaca’s proclamation remains stalled after the camp of her rival, former three-term Gov. Benjamin Dy, asked for the exclusion of allegedly questionable election returns from Ilagan, Tumauini and Echague towns in the official canvass.

Padaca, however, believes that she won over Dy by as many as 12,000 votes.

Deja vu

She said the delay in her proclamation was a repeat of the harassment she experienced during the 2004 polls, when a Comelec resolution issued by controversial Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano delayed her declaration as the winner.

The questioned returns have been taken to the Comelec central office in Manila for safekeeping.

Dy has filed a petition with the Comelec questioning the results in the three towns.

Padaca made headlines in 2004 when she won by a landslide over Dy’s brother, Faustino Jr.

She belongs to the “new breed” of Philippine politicians who include Fr. Ed Panlilio, governor-elect of Pampanga, and Jesse Robredo, Naga City mayor.

Padaca leading

Despite the assessment of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) that the elections in the provinces were marred by irregularities, the council said Padaca enjoyed a clear lead over her rival.

The PPCRV’s final quick-count tally showed that Padaca won with 230,366 votes while Dy had 216,614, for a margin of 13,752.

Padaca said she was a victim of black propaganda a few days before the elections. She said helicopters showered some towns with leaflets stating that she had many mansions, that her entire family was living in the governor’s house, and that she would spend most of her time in a high-end beauty salon.

Lessons learned

On Saturday, Padaca spoke candidly about her worries, victories, frustrations and revealed the lessons she learned during her three-year governorship and how these had affected her personal life.

“They said I was too serious [in carrying out my duties as governor], that it was such a burden to me, that I did not enjoy [being governor],” she said.

During her three years as governor, Padaca said the easiest part was winning.

“Many people thought that since I won easily, I would also solve their problems easily,” she said.

Passing the torch

In her next term, she said, she would try to develop people who sincerely want to serve the country and who had “fire in their bellies.”

Padaca said she wanted Isabela mayors to be her partners in reaching out to the people of the province.

However, many mayors still do not recognize her leadership and some have even refused to remit real property tax collections to the province’s coffers.

“They claim I don’t have projects in their towns but it’s their duty to remit. I can sue them, but I’ll end up alienating them all the more,” she said.

‘Jueteng’ war

Her administration’s crusade against “jueteng” is far from over, Padaca said.

The illegal numbers game should be solved at the “macro-level,” which means that national government officials should take the lead, she said.

In the meantime, Padaca said she wanted to initiate more microfinancing projects for families who depend heavily on jueteng for their daily income and survival.

She said she planned to convince businessmen to come to Isabela and invest in local tourism, agriculture and even call centers.

Padaca said that in her second term, she would delegate more responsibilities to her subordinates and reach out more to the people.

“I tend to do all the work [because I am] afraid there might be mistakes,” she said.

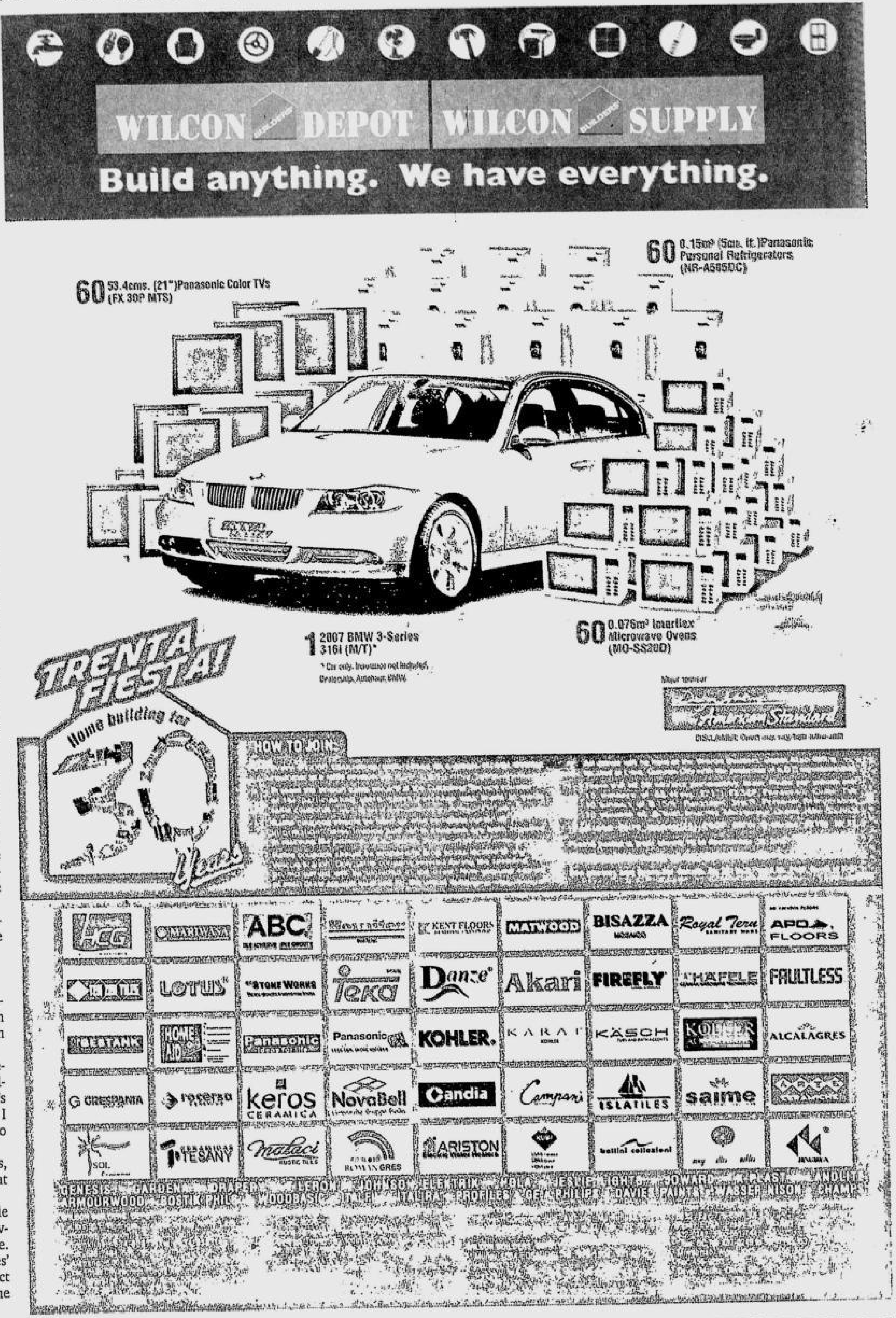
Reaching out

As a result, many of her constituents, including parish priests, feel she does not reach out to them.

“During parties, I don’t table-hop. People think politicians always wave and shake everybody’s hand. They tend to forget that I am using crutches. I can’t really go around in fiestas,” she said.

Despite the stress of politics, Padaca said she realized that power can be a good thing.

“You can use it to help people who have been neglected by government for a very long time. With one signature, with one ‘yes’ or with one ‘no,’ you can affect the lives of so many people,” she said.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OPINION

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Proclaiming Grace

EDITORIAL

IT TOOK ABOUT A MONTH FOR THE COMMISSION on Elections to proclaim radio host Grace Padaca the governor of Isabela province in 2004. She had beaten Faustino Dy Jr., the patriarch of the Isabela dynasty that ruled provincial politics for decades, and the inevitable protest took several weeks to negotiate the Comelec thicket. Now, reelected to a second term, Padaca looks set to suffer another anxiety-ridden delay.

Her opponent, Benjamin Dy, is the younger brother of the man she defeated in 2004. In one sense, he was the much harder candidate to beat, because he had served as governor for three successive terms. In another sense, he was a surprise candidate, because his brother was widely expected to run for governor again. He filed his certificate of candidacy, quite literally, at the last minute.

Trailing Padaca in the count, he petitioned the Comelec to exclude a number of election returns, bringing her lead down from about 12,000 to some 5,000 votes.

"What is funny," said Sen. Franklin Drilon, head of the Liberal Party wing that Padaca belongs to, "is that the election returns which were excluded were the same election returns used by the Comelec for proclaiming Congressman Rodolfo Albano Jr. and the vice governor in Isabela. And yet, while these election returns were valid, in so far as Congressman Rodolfo Albano Jr. and the vice governor is concerned, it was questionable when it came to Governor Padaca."

Dy has also asked the Comelec to declare a failure of elections in nine towns in Isabela because of an elaborate *dagdag-bawas* operation allegedly conducted by Padaca's political allies.

Padaca's response to that petition is summed up in one plaintive question: "How come the elections in these towns should be considered a failure when surely the elections were held, the votes were cast and canvassed and the winning candidates were proclaimed?"

To be sure, vote-buying marred the elections, perhaps to a greater extent than in 2004. The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, whom Padaca credits for protecting the real results of the 2004 vote, said the conduct of the 2007 elections was marked by many irregularities.

"It is disgusting to note that aside from the suspended proclamation of the winner for governor, the campaign period was marked by blatant vote-buying," said Fr. Antonio Ancheta, the chair of the PPCRV in Isabela.

It is worth noting that the Padaca allies Dy referred to belong to the other prominent political family in Isabela, the Albanos. Once inseparable allies, the two families appear to have parted ways, after an earlier agreement to unite behind Faustino Jr. broke down because Benjamin decided (or was convinced) to run for governor. The most high-profile Albano these days, is Tonypet, Team Unity's tireless deputy spokesman; he was all set to run for governor **against** Padaca, when the unity agreement was reached. After the breach, the Albanos decided to cast their lot with Padaca.

(The alliance makes political sense, at least to the Albanos. A resurgent Dy in the Governor's Mansion would make for a more formidable opponent in 2010.)

It is also worth noting that the alliance with the Albanos—unsought, but utilized just the same—may have cost Padaca some votes, perhaps in the more urbanized areas or among professionals.

Now the provincial board of canvassers has passed on the petition to declare a failure of elections to the Comelec central office. The region's commissioner in charge, incidentally, is the chair of the Comelec himself, Benjamin Abalos.

For someone who endured the long wait before victory and proclamation once before, the prospect of another delay is deeply unsettling. "Let me and the people of Isabela not go through again what we had experienced in the 2004 elections," Padaca said. "For once and at once, please erase our fears regarding the Comelec."

The good news is, the nation's attention is once again focused on the race in Isabela. The longer the wait, the more the public will be interested. This should help protect the real results of the Isabela vote. The bad news is, the nation's attention is, once again, focused on the race in Isabela. In the struggle against vote manipulation, we are still, regretfully, right where we started.

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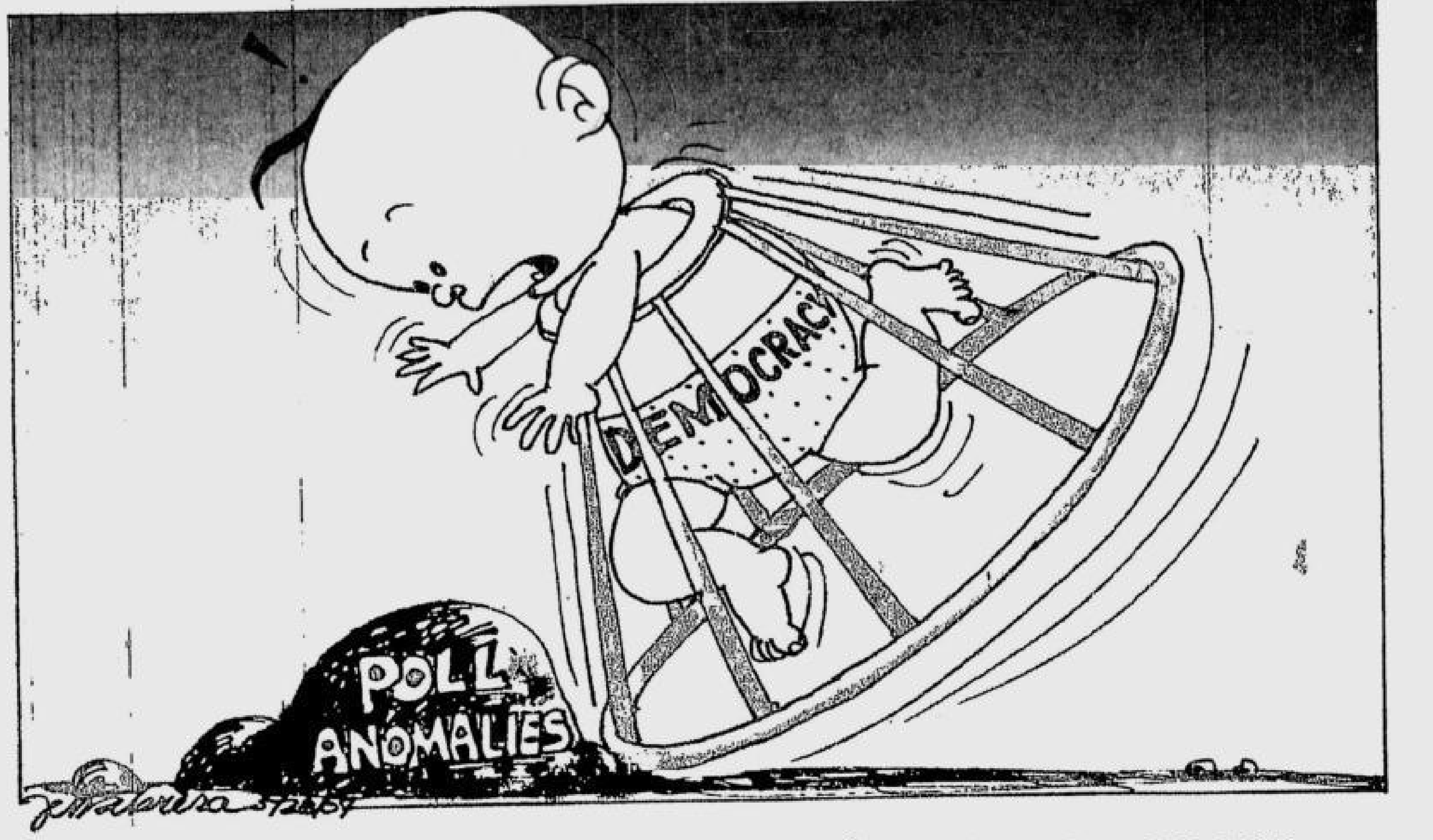


Can the Comelec prevent cheating in 2010?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS, WHEther composed of the present commissioners or of new ones, should work double-time in the next three years, before the presidential elections in 2010, to make sure that the massive cheating that's taking place is not repeated—ever again. With each election, the cheaters become more inventive, audacious, shameless, and often successful. The only reason the cheaters failed to win more Senate seats this time is the doggedness and bravery of the eagle-eyed election watchdog groups.

Cheating has become more sophisticated and easier. Before, it was the ballots that were falsified—which required plenty of work and time. Now, it is the Statement of Votes and the Certificates of Canvass—which indicate the total number of votes counted in the city, municipal and provincial levels—that are altered. Now cheating is wholesale, in the hundreds of thousands of votes. And it is so easy to do. Just add number 1 to a number, say, 10,000 votes, and it becomes 110,000. Or make a number 1 into a 7 or 9 and 10,000 becomes 70,000 or 90,000.

Comelec officials and teachers are supposed to be paragons of virtue who will prevent cheating. But more and more of them are being coopted by political operators. Poll watchers are also supposed to spot cheating, but what if they are barred from polling places, such as those in Maguindanao and other areas in Mindanao?

Let's face it, the character of our poll officials and the manner of cheating have changed, and the old safeguards are no longer enough. The Comelec must always be one step ahead of the cheaters. The Comelec must formulate some priority reforms if it is to prevent massive cheating in the 2010 elections where, owing to its being a presidential election year, the stakes are much higher. You can be sure that even now, the cheaters are already planning their operations.

The first priority, of course, is poll automation to make the counting faster. The longer the counting takes, the more chances of cheating there are. In fact, this is a basic tactic of cheaters: delay the counting and canvassing of votes to give them time to do their thing. The submission of the Certificates of Canvass (COCs) and the Statement of Votes (SOVs) from the provinces to the National Board of Canvassers in Manila is purposely delayed. If the cheaters' candidates are losing, they can adjust the figures in the SOVs and COCs to cover the deficit.

The second priority is to weed out the corrupt in the Comelec—and it should start from the top. Comelec officials and employees are supposed to be the "policemen" of the polls. But what if it is the policemen themselves who are doing the cheating? The evidence of cheating in Mindanao shows some Comelec officials altering the election results. Money talks, and it seems that in the Comelec, the saying that "everybody has his price" is true.

We have laws that punish cheating and other violations of election laws, but the Comelec rarely enforces or punishes the perpetrators. One obvious reason is that there are so many violators that the Comelec doesn't have the time or manpower to prosecute them. Faced with the enormity of the task, the Comelec just gives up and looks the other way.

Take the case of the illegal posters and streamers that were put up outside the poster areas. There were so many of them. The Metro Manila Development Authority tried to remove them, but as soon as its workers left, the workers of candidates returned and pasted more posters. The government ended up spending millions of pesos cleaning up the dirt left behind by the candidates—millions of pesos that could otherwise have been used to help the people. The Comelec has not punished even one candidate or worker for these violations.

Another violation of epidemic scale is vote-buying and vote-selling. It is now done openly and blatantly. Some voters shamelessly wait outside polling places, waiting for someone to buy their votes. And vote-buyers hold wads of bills in plain view of the public to entice voters to sell their votes. But have you heard of a vote-buyer or vote-seller being prosecuted by the Comelec?

And would you believe that the Comelec itself—and the electoral tribunals (Presidential, Senate and House)—encourages cheating? They do this by taking such a long time to resolve election cases. In cases where a complainant wins, the decision usually comes when there are only a few days left of the contested term, meaning, the cheater has already occupied the stolen position for almost the whole term and collected the salaries and allowances, as well as the pork barrel, of the winner.

So the battle is to be proclaimed the winner. Even if a cheat were caught, if he had been proclaimed, the complainant would have a difficult time—not to mention the precious time he would have to spend—pushing him off. And that is what encourages cheating. "What if I am caught?" the cheater would say. "If I'm proclaimed, it is the same as being the real winner."

To discourage this thinking, the law should be amended so that in the case of an election complaint which, after a quick summary hearing, is found to be meritorious, the salaries and allowances of the position are frozen and paid to the winner only after the case shall have been decided. Thus, the real winner can still collect all his backpay. And the cheater does not get any emolument during all the time he occupies the stolen position.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: This was sent by a reader in Filipino.

Pag nag-number 1 si Loren, *mababaliw si* Chiz. *Pag nag-number 3 si* Ping, *mababaliw si* Villar. *Pag nanalo si* Trillanes, *mababaliw si* Gloria. *Pag nanalo si* Alan, *mababaliw si* Mike Arroyo. *Pag nanalo si* Pichay, *mababaliw tayong lahat*!

Hero

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WANTED TO WRITE ABOUT IT LAST WEEK shortly after it happened, but it got waylaid by one thing and another. It's far too important to let pass without comment.

That is the death, or murder, of Nellie Banaag and Leticia Ramos in Taysan, Batangas. Banaag was a public school teacher and Ramos was a poll watcher for one of the candidates. Both burned to death when the schoolhouse to which they were assigned was torched by goons.

Those goons, not surprisingly, turned out to be men in uniform. Specifically, five of the PNP's own. One even carried the rank of inspector. They were members of a PNP Regional Special Operations Group, giving whole new meanings to the already perverse ones associated with the phrase "special operations."

Last we heard, the five were being held in the custody of the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management. If nothing should come out of their investigation and management of detection in this respect, which is bound to happen if we ourselves do not particularly care what happens to it, then we might as well stop pretending to be a country that still cares about justice, or, heaven forbid, democracy. Or, hell, that still cares about our future. Certainly, we will have made a mockery of an exercise expressly done to uphold all of them.

You want a face for this election, for all the cheating, vote-buying and bloodletting that went with it, that is it: the faces, or twisted shapes of what were once human bodies, burned beyond recognition. Some details simply jut out in the mind and encapsulate entire events. In 1969, when Marcos ran for reelection and spawned the most violent and fraudulent election up to that time, that one detail was Bingbong Crisologo burning two villages in Ilocos out of pique. Today, in this most fraudulent and violent election since 1986, that one detail is goons, also called law enforcers, burning a schoolhouse in Batangas out of the belief—no, the certainty—they could get away with it.

The second is not the less heinous for "only" two people perishing in its wake. It is probably the more heinous. Or at least it is the more chilling. The first was done in a culture of lawlessness, when warlords and their spawn were free to defy the law as and when they saw fit, believing that no matter how shocking their deeds, the world could not touch them. The second was done in a culture of impunity, when evildoers and their spawn are free to screw decency as and when they see fit, knowing that however obscene what they do, it would no longer strike a nation benumbed beyond measure as being so, blithely slipping through its net of memory as just another one of those things.

That is what's happening to the case of the two victims. At least Crisologo was caught and punished and his act of burning the two villages remained a cautionary tale for years to come. Nellie Banaag and Leticia Ramos are being forgotten faster than it took the conflagration in the schoolhouse to consume them. That is heinous.

But it's not just a question of clinging to their memories with the desperation of drowning men to a log, and—as with Jonas Burgos and the host of other dead or disappeared—demanding in the shrillest voices justice for them. It's also—in the case of Nellie Banaag, in particular—a question of honoring her and making sure her sacrifice will not be in vain.

Of course Banaag did not die clutching the ballot box like several public school teachers in the past, trying to protect it from thugs who eventually took it anyway quite literally over their dead bodies. Banaag died from being unable to escape the blaze. But her death is no less heroic. It is no less heroic not just because she died, like the others, performing the most heroic duty of making elections possible amid near-impossible odds, amid the pervasive shadows determined to not make it so. It is no less heroic because she lived, like the others, performing the most heroic duty of opening young minds to possibilities amid near-impossible odds, amid an order and society that couldn't care less about it.

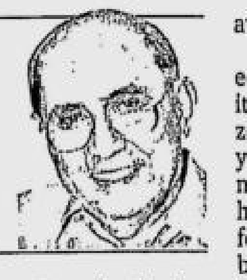
My apologies to OFWs, but in my book there is only one hero in this country, modern or traditional. That is the teacher, especially the public school teacher who must now endure the derision of the world—dancers now "settle" for being public school PE teachers while in hiatus between gigs in Japan and elsewhere—along with the beggar's crumbs they get for their pains. This, while holding the fate of this country in their hands. Or so if you realize that the fate of this country lies in the minds that they mold.

OFWs—and soldiers—only defend this country's body, teachers protect this country's soul. We tacitly acknowledge the overweening importance of teachers when we make them poll watchers. We say that there is no other group or class or species in this country we can trust to have the loftiness of spirit and purity of heart to keep elections clean. Not government, not the Church, not business, not the NGOs, not the men and women, children and beasts that parade themselves before the world in all their righteousness. Only the teachers, and the most badly paid of them all, the public school teachers. When they die in the hands of evildoers, while carrying out the trust we have reposed in them, it staggers the mind that we cannot be stoked to fury by it.

I have one shrill demand, and that is to declare hero Banaag and all the other teachers in the past who went down in defense of the ballot; and to recognize that officially by giving their families all the privileges and emoluments that go with the honor. I have one even shriller demand:

That is to start by giving all the salaries and emoluments of Benjamin Abalos and the Comelec commissioners to them.

Gregory Ong



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Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE CASE OF JUSTICE GREGORY ONG IS A LAW professor's dream material for class discussion and analysis. Ong has been extended an appointment to the Supreme Court by the President, but his qualification for the post is being challenged on the ground that he is not a natural-born Filipino citizen. What's the score? As I see it, Justice Ong's claim to natural-born citizenship is not without foundation. Let me outline the story.

From the documents I have seen and from what I know of Philippine jurisprudence, Ong's Filipino citizenship can be traced way back to his great-grandmother, Maria Santos of Bulacan.

Maria Santos was a Filipina through and through. In 1904, she bore a son by a Chinese national, Chan Kin. The child came to be known as Juan Santos, taking the family name of the mother.

Since Chan Kin was Chinese, Juan was not born a Filipino (unless the parents were not married). But in 1906, when Juan was 2 years old, the father died. By Philippine jurisprudence (Talaroc vs Uy) Maria Santos regained her Filipino citizenship (on the assumption that she had married Chan Kin and thereby lost her Filipino citizenship by marrying an alien). Her minor son, Juan, followed her citizenship. But Juan did not seem to have known that he had become a Filipino citizen and was therefore registered as an alien.

Juan later married Sy Siok Hian. The couple bore several children, one of whom was Dy Giok Santos, born 1933, the mother of Gregory Ong. But on the belief that he was Chinese, Juan mistakenly registered his children as Chinese.

In 1958, however, Juan filed a petition for cancellation of his and his children's registration as aliens. The petition was granted in the same year.

However, the petition of Juan did not include the eldest daughter, Dy Giok Santos, Gregory's mother, because she was then already married to Eugenio Onghanseng, a Chinese national. However, in my judgment, being a legitimate daughter of a Filipino, Dy Giok Santos, like her sisters, was a Filipino when she married Eugenio in 1950 even if she was then still incorrectly registered as Chinese. But by her marriage to Eugenio she lost her Philippine citizenship. Thus Gregory Ong was born in 1953 to an alien father and to a woman who had lost her Philippine citizenship by marriage. Under such circumstance can he nevertheless be a natural-born Filipino now?

In all fairness and under our Constitution, without going into the other qualifications of Gregory Ong, it is my belief that he is deemed a natural-born Filipino citizen. How do I arrive at this conclusion?

I begin with the 1935 Constitution under which Gregory was born and which says that Filipino citizens include **"those whose mothers are citizens of the Philippines and, upon reaching the age of majority, elect Philippine citizenship."** Does this provision mean that the child must be born while the mother is still Filipino, or is it enough that the mother was Filipino at the time of marriage? If we read this provision as meaning that the child must be born at the time when the mother is still Filipino, the constitutional provision would have no meaning because under our citizenship law, then in effect, a woman lost her Filipino citizenship upon marriage to an alien if she thereby acquired the citizenship of her husband. For the provision to have a meaning, it must be read as referring to children born of mothers who were Filipinos at the time of marriage. This, in fact, is the meaning followed in Co vs House Electoral Tribunal. Thus, Gregory Ong had the right to elect Philippine citizenship upon reaching the age of majority because his mother was Filipino at the time of marriage. Did Gregory avail of the right to elect Filipino citizenship?

Gregory did not elect and could not have elected Philippine citizenship when he reached majority because by then he was already a Filipino citizen. How so? In 1964, when Gregory was 11 years old, his father was naturalized and, as a minor, he automatically followed the citizenship of his father. The situation thus placed him on all fours with the case of Co vs House Electoral Tribunal which said: "To expect the respondent to have formally or in writing elected citizenship when he came of age is to ask for the unnatural and unnecessary. The reason is obvious. He was already a citizen." Or, as the House Electoral Tribunal said in Co vs House Electoral Tribunal, since the Revised Naturalization Act made him a Filipino citizen when his father was naturalized, **"it was the law itself that had already elected Philippine citizenship for protestee by declaring him as such."**

Thus, not only was Gregory a citizen by virtue of the naturalization of his father but also by the perfection, upon reaching the age of majority, of the inchoate citizenship he had received from his mother through the provision of the 1935 Constitution. But did that thereby make him a natural-born citizen of the Philippines?

The answer to this last question is found in the 1987 Constitution which says: "Those who elect Philippine citizenship in accordance with [the 1935 Constitutional provision] shall be deemed natural-born citizens." The purpose of this provision, as shown in the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, was to equalize the situation of all those descended from a Filipino mother. What is important is that the child descended from a Filipino mother.

Finally, can we go back and examine the citizenship of the forebears of Gregory all the way to Maria Santos? Again I quote Co vs House Electoral Tribunal: "The Court cannot go into the collateral procedure of stripping [forebears] of citizenship after [their] death and at this very late date just so we can go after the [descendant]."

Limbo 'closed'—doors opened

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

SUDDENLY, LIMBO IS A NON-PLACE. LITERAture has just lost a choice metaphor. The great Dante has to revise his cosmology of hell. St. Augustine must eat humble pie. Meanwhile, unbaptized children unaware of all the fuss, have been "up there" with God all this time regardless of where they were consigned.

We may be in the midst of theological stirrings. As in the past (Galileo, slavery, interest for money, etc.), reversals like "Limbo Lost" seldom stop "there." Repercussions follow.

What follows after Limbo?

"Everyone is born in the state of grace." "God's salvific will is bigger than the institutional Church." These are strong and solemn statements by two leading theologians. Questions on baptism, original sin, the afterlife, grace for everybody (which means salvation outside the Church) will be raised. These are exciting times for theology-watchers. The 30 theologians of the International Theological Commission (ITC) will be very busy.

Theological developments are both welcome and unwelcome. They will be unwelcome to those who can't believe that the Institutional Church is less than perfect. In the push and pull of *semper reformanda* (reform always) and the-Church-never-changes, they will choose the latter because the very idea of the Church changing its position is hard to take.

There is an image to protect and authority that must not be eroded. The people made uncomfortable by Pope John Paul II's plea for forgiveness for the Church's faults and injustices of the past centuries will be uncomfortable again.

Many people put the hierarchy on pedestals, and although many have stepped down, some priests like to be on top, for the pedestal is power. Incidentally, I hope *"ing pare, yang hari"* never goes to the head of Fr. Ed Panlilio whom I have supported from the start.

Many solid Catholics also refuse to be unsettled by anything "new." "I stay with the 'old.' How do I know this new thing is right?" "I've grown wise, holy and comfortable with the rules and teachings. I can no longer adjust." *"Ay,* leave me with my prayers and devotions. I don't like my mind to be disturbed anymore."

On the other hand theological developments are also welcome.

They show that the Church is listening and connecting to modern times. Limbo was doomed because of "pressing pastoral needs." How could the growing millions of un-baptized children of non-believers, of the very poor or lost by abortion, abandonment, stillbirth, miscarriage, get to heaven? *Sensus fidelium* or sense of the faithful, a norm for the formulation of doctrine, may finally be taken more seriously.

This latest "rare admission of error" may also mean that the Church is letting up on its dogmatism—an attitude so immovable, so exclusivist, that it breeds intolerance and frustrates dialogue. The Church may shed more of its lingering inquisitorial disposition inherited from the unforgiving dogmatism of the Inquisition.

Dogmatism is an attitude that has penetrated the Church's manner of teaching, its manner of declaring beliefs and our conditioned manner of receiving them. No one can deny that Limbo, etc., was taught to us as official teaching and we were supposed to believe them as such. My late beloved dean-philosopher "chewed the host" as soon as "touching the teeth" was allowed, to show that "I obey the Pope at all times."

With Church teachings coming down to us in many forms—decrees, encyclicals, pastoral letters, catechism, formal documents, homilies, doctrines, dogmas, etc.—we are now led to ask a fair question after Limbo: what's an "official teaching"; what's a "common teaching"; and which are official, which are common?

The final flourish of dogmatism is declaring teachings as "binding" or requiring "assent," or attaching mortal or venial sin to their infraction. This reminds me of the more benevolent God who said, "I'm sorry, but I can't agree with all your decisions to send people to hell."

Maybe now, the Church will go slow on being so definitive or binding in its pronouncements and rules, and will not feel impelled to make "official Catholic positions on every conceivable issue"; so that if it must rectify, it can do so more forthrightly without apology, faster instead of taking centuries, like it did on Limbo, etc.; and without fear that it must do damage control and put the toothpaste back into the tube.

It's good to know that theologians are continually "evaluating and re-evaluating our beliefs." Then it will not be such a shocker to be told that there are several levels of beliefs and that there are very few dogmas, contrary to our treating everything as if they were. "Join the procession and you will gain a plenary indulgence." I am not a Bible quoter but Mark 7:7 is too tempting: "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines, human precepts."

Actually, the examination of beliefs does not disturb Faith. Faith with a capital F becomes stronger even in spells or seasons of disbelief.

Theological movement is welcome. It's an opening of doors, of our minds, not the least. What lies beyond may be intimidating but we must walk in. We can't close the doors again, not with media "live" and merciless. If Galileo were condemned today, it would be flashed in the "breaking news" and there would be a howl around the world.

Asuncion David Maramba is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to marda_ph@yahoo.com; fax 8210659.

Calabasa and the counting

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

KAPITAN CALABASA gets a phone call.

"Ka, ke, ki, ko, ku!"

"What? Hello?"

"Ba, be, bi, bo, bu!"

"Hello? Hello? This is Kapitan Calabasa who's this? Crank calls are not allowed on the hotline! Whoever you are, this is a high-security hotline for important..."

"Calabasa!"

"Who the hell is this?"

"This is Secretary Sipsip!"

"Oh, Sir. What happened?"

"Sorry, Attorney was playing with the phone again, he hasn't been well, you know."

"Oh, that was him?"

"Yes. Anyway, pay attention. Assistant Secretary Apog and Undersecretary Uhaw are with me, we have a little problem."

"How can I help, Sir?"

"Ma'am is upset because our plans got messed up by the intramurals in the Kapos and Laki coalition. Governor Guiguisain was with Laki, and so was Mayor Matacao, but Representative Garapal ended up with Kapos, and the long and short of it, no one was able to deliver."

"Deliver what?"

"Don't be stupid, Calabasa."

'Yung kwan..."

"'Yung ano?"

'Yung alam mo na!"

"Oh! That!"

"Anyway, Chairman Ayos is here with us, and he'll explain more."

"Hello, Chairman!"

"Yes? Hello, hello. Calabasa, we have a problem!"

"What is it, Sir?"

"My God, did you know, everyone thinks they're a mathematician! Questioning everything! And I keep telling them, there's plenty more to add up!"

"There are?"

"Plenty! Trillions! Billions! Maybe millions. Well, OK. Thousands. Hundreds, even! Dozens! Or something. I don't know yet, but I know it's plenty! At least, enough. Hopefully."

"So what's the problem, Sir?"

"What? Point is: It's not over! It can change! Dramatically!"

"It can?"

"Yes!"

"How?"

"We're figuring it out."

"Chairman Ayos, I thought you're in charge of the counting. So how can I help, again?"

"Ah. Yes. We need you to help project what I like to call the New Math™. Let me ask you. 1+1=?"

"2!"

"No! The correct answer is, it depends!"

"On what?"

"Where the 1's are coming from!"

"Huh?"

"Say one 1 is from our bailiwick, and the other 1 is not. I will count our 1, but not their 1. I will say, look, here's 1 for, oh, let's invent the name of a candidate, say, Zooberry... and I won't mention the other 1, for, say, oh, let's call the candidate Pimple. What do we have?"

"1 for (tee hee) Zooberry!"

"Very good, you see, we don't even mention Pimple, because 1+0=?"

"1! But what happened to the other 1?"

"Well, that's our problem now. Pimple still has a 1, and Zooberry has a 1, so we need some more 1's."

"But I already gave you our 1's. Where else are we going to get them, Sir?"

"I don't know! But maybe, just maybe, we can do this. I can say your 1 just arrived, and so I can say it's a special 1, it's a heavy 1."

"A heavy 1?"

"Yes, because Calabasa is a bailiwick of Madame."

"Ah."

"And I can keep ignoring the 1 for Pimple from the non-bailiwick."

"And?"

"Well, hopefully they can harvest some other special 1's from Barangays Bayad and Dayaan, which are also our bailiwicks. So 1+1+1=3 which is greater than the 1 we know the other side has. We're having special you-know-what's there as we speak."

"But if we don't find the 1's?"

"We have a problem, because, of course, I haven't mentioned the three dozen other barangays where the other side got all the 1's. So it's 3 for Zooberry and actually 14 for Pimple. But they're relying on the Old Math. With our New Math™, our 3 is greater than their 14, because their 14 really means 4-1=3, and if we apply our patented stock market and currency equivalent differentials..."

"What are those?"

"The bonuses Madame's people get, because of how fantastic she is!"

"Oh."

"So if you add our differentials, it's really 3+1+1= 5 to their 3!"

"That's unreal, but amazing, if you don't mind my saying so, Sir."

"So that's why we called you. If we can convince people our New Math™ is better, even if they got more, we can say they got less!"

"How did you figure this all out, Sir?"

"Oh, that's a trade secret. Anyway, here's Secretary Sipsip to give you the details."

"Calabasa! Now that you understand the New Math™, everytime media approach you, we want you to say only two magic words. Repeat after me. 'We will win!'"

"We will win!"

"Say it again!"

"We will win!"

"With feeling!"

"We will win!"

"Very good! And if anyone asks you why you're so sure, you only have to answer with one word: 'Because.' Get it? So let's practice. Say I'm a reporter. I will ask you questions. Ready? Kapitan, so far the counting's neck and neck, what's your comment?"

"We will win!"

"But Sir, there are allegations some areas favorable to your side are being counted first, and the other places, delayed?"

"We will win!"

"But sir, citizens' groups say..."

"We will win!"

"But what's your basis for saying..."

"Because!"

"Because what, Sir?"

"We will win!"

Reflections on a flying brotherhood

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

THE DECADE OF THE '50s WERE YEARS OF OPTIMISM and economic well-being for our country. Ramon Magsaysay, the most beloved of Philippine presidents, provided us with a sense of hope and confidence in the future. We would lose him after a few years, specifically in 1957, when he perished in an air accident on the slopes of Mount Manunggal on the island of Cebu.

For 17 young men training to become pilots of the Philippine Air Force, the manner of his loss would reflect the dangers of the profession to which they aspired.

* * *

Last Saturday, members of the class of 1957 of the PAF Flying School gathered on the parade grounds of Fernando Air Base in Lipa City to mark the 50th anniversary of their entry into the brotherhood of airmen. Fernando Air Base is named after Lt. Col. Basilio B. Fernando, the first Filipino commanding officer of the Philippine Army Air Corps (PAAC). He died in a B-25 night-flying training accident in Oklahoma, USA, just after the end of World War II.

The original members of the class consisted of 13 student officers from the Philippine Military Academy and 41 aviation cadets. Of the 13 student officers, nine would complete the course. Of the 41 cadets, the five most outstanding were selected to undergo advanced flying training in US Air Force facilities. Twenty-eight other cadets were eliminated, leaving only eight to complete the pilot program. On graduation day, 50 years ago, the Philippine Air Force had 17 new pilots proudly sporting silver wings, emblems of military flying proficiency.

Of the 17 graduates, one became the Air Force commanding general. Romeo David served as president of Clark Development Corp. while Augustus Paiso headed Air Philippines. Three of our cadet classmates—Rene Barrientos, Rogelio Narciso and Resplendor Geluz—would go on to become PAL 747 captains, with Narciso ending his career also as president of Air Philippines.

In August 1983, Luther Custodio was the head of the Aviation Security Command (Avsecom), which had responsibility for security operations at the Manila International Airport. The tumultuous events of that period would lead to his being one of the defendants in the Aquino-Galman murder case.

The wise saying that "the air, more than the land or the sea, is so unforgiving of mistakes" held true for our class. Our first casualty was Alfonso Donesa. We called him "Big Brother" because he was the oldest in the group. After graduation, he was assigned to the 5th Fighter Wing in Basa Air Base, Pampanga. While checking out for the P-51 (Mustang), his plane crashed during take-off and landing exercises.

Of the five who graduated from US Air Force facilities, three perished in air accidents—Gilberto Ledesma, Luis Gatmaitan and Norberto de Guzman, all F-86 jet pilots. The two who survived were Rene Barrientos, father of Philippine tennis ace, Felix Barrientos; and Lawrence Dulawan, the first Igorot jet fighter pilot of the Philippine Air Force.

Another casualty was Diosdado Rodriguez Jr., son of a former deputy chief of staff, AFP. He was piloting a C-47 when it crashed into a mountain in Mindoro.

Only one member of the class tried his luck in politics. Tony Lukban didn't quite make it and now enjoys the life of a gentleman-farmer in Camarines Norte. Augusto Dario is a successful entrepreneur in the real estate and housing business; while our McMicking awardee, Pete Manalo, is also into a number of business ventures. Temy Mison was the first Boholano jet fighter pilot. After retirement from the Central Bank, he migrated to the United States. Ruben Dario, the first captain of the aviation cadet corps, was active in the field of general aviation, while Erasmo Rivera still serves as a consultant with Pagcor.

* * *

We started our flying-training in a wonderful airplane, the PT-13, an open cockpit biplane. Let me say something about flying in one of these old dinosaurs, which have now been relegated to air museums in the United States or are being used in some air shows. Nothing beats the feel of the wind rushing against your face as you soar into the heavens with the world beneath your wings. And nothing you will ever experience can compare with that first solo flight as you break the bonds of Mother Earth with only yourself to ensure a safe return. And by the way, if by chance you forget to strap yourself properly inside the cockpit before take-off, you could find yourself separated from your aircraft as you perform maneuvers requiring unusual positions.

The instructor pilot who released me for my first solo flight was captain—now retired colonel—Johnny Estoesta, a hotshot Mustang fighter pilot from Basa Air Base. It was also another fighter pilot, Lt. Marcelo "Lito" Barbero who released me for solo in the advanced trainer, the T-6, famous for its ground looping tendency—an embarrassing situation which usually brought out the fire truck at Fernando Air Base.

I remember both of them, along with all my other flight instructors, with affection and gratitude, for providing me with the fundamentals of airmanship, aware that everything else rests with the great Co-pilot above who makes the final decision about our lives.

* * *

Since we left the Air Force, the organization has changed its focus in significant ways. Gone are the dreams of a jet fighter fleet which once made us the pride of South East Asian air forces. The need to live within our limited resources as well as the changes in the national threats we face, has resulted in a shift in our priorities. Developing a helicopter capability designed to support the war against insurgents and terror groups has become our No. 1 objective and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Perhaps, a greater challenge faced by the present air force leadership under Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino is how to retain enough of our young pilots who may be finding it difficult to maintain high standards of flying proficiency in the face of limited aircraft. There is also the lure of commercial aviation which offers greater opportunities not only in terms of financial remuneration but also in terms of exposure to advanced technologies. A young Air Force captain facing growing family responsibilities is extremely vulnerable to the attractions of the private sector. Unless we provide more incentives for our pilots, we may lose them as quickly as they come off the production line.

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Electoral revelations and goals

THIS ELECTORAL EXERCISE HAS shown yet again how pathetic Philippine politics has become and how bereft we are of a sense of community, of the common good, of nationhood.

Greed for power and privilege—which is evident among our putative national and local leaders—drives the process. There's not even a pretense of party loyalty or of adherence to party platform, just empty slogans and silly nicknames. Running for office seems nothing more than a quest for self-gratification or self-glorification. So the campaign takes on the aspect of the cockpit, the boxing ring, the billiard parlor or the lotto station.

Candidates who don't have what it takes simply buy their way to the tally sheets, their handlers and supporters behaving like odds-makers placing bets.

In Cagayan de Oro, moneyed supporters of both sides were said to have bet as much as half a million for their slate, while vote-buying ranged from P100 to P2,000 per voter. But what can you expect when even the justice secretary offers to bribe barangay leaders with the promise of post-election payoff? The ballot has turned into a lotto ticket!.

Worse, we saw how the "art" of vote-buying has been honed to perfection by hiring make-believe poll watchers and precinct coordinators. You want to corner the precinct votes? Simply recruit 50 to 70 "watchers." Naturally, they'll vote for you, as will their family and *barkada*—and that's enough to capture most of a precinct's 200 votes.

Thus, the real winners are vested interests, dynasties and "political entrepreneurs"—people who gamble on campaigns in hopes of winning big, in cash and political influence. All because Filipinos vote as if they're on a gaming table, they vote with their hunches, not with their aspirations for a better society. So goes good governance out the window.

The horror of it all is, only a few seem to see or care how this is driving our society toward disaster, closer to being a failed state. This is what happens when self-interest reigns.

Let's face it: we are a long way from political maturity and true nationhood. There are not enough leaders who care, not enough Filipinos who appreciate freedom and its responsibilities, and too many who prefer to take shortcuts at the expense of everyone else—which is what they do when they vote for wealthy demagogues, coup plotters, grandstanding spouses of celebrities and what-not. This is not the way to political maturity or solidarity. Irresponsible people create irresponsible governments.

Now that the brouhaha is over, let us brace ourselves for turbulence and unrest.

—MANUEL E. VALDEHUESA JR.,
convenor,
Task Force for Good Governance,
Cagayan de Oro City,
valdeman_esq@yahoo.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Cheers for Esperon and AFP

CHIEF OF STAFF, GEN. HERMOGENES Esperon and the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines deserve a well-earned praise and commendation. Despite the hotly contested elections, the AFP has proven itself to be apolitical.

While the conduct of the elections in many parts of the country turned out to be far from the ideal, we still have to hear of reports or complaints—not even from militant groups—about military intervention in the election process, save in instances where the soldiers' presence was called for to prevent clashes and deter criminal elements out to sabotage the elections. Many of our soldiers in fact lost their lives while guarding the sanctity of the ballot. We grieve for them.

The AFP, under General Esperon, has redeemed itself from the unkind charges and insinuations that it allowed itself to be used for partisan activities in the past.

There might be attempts later on to discredit the military institution, but we are certain that this will no longer wash. Even in surveys conducted by the Ateneo de Davao University among members of the academe, the military fared incredibly high in the area of trust. This we should recognize and celebrate.

Trust is a virtue that is difficult to earn especially in an area where corruption is a fact of everyday life. We therefore salute our men in uniform for the honor they earned for our country. May they keep up the good work for again we are very proud of them.

—MIRIAM DAHUNOG,
miriamdahunog70@yahoo.com

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DepEd on 'delayed' teachers' benefits

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER TITLED "WHY gov't doesn't care for public school teachers." (INQUIRER, 5/10/07) May we inform the teacher concerned and others that, in coordination with the Department of Education Division of Quezon City and the writer's principal Grace A. Tariman, we have conducted an inquiry on the issues raised. These are some of our findings:

- On delayed salaries. Tariman says there has never been an incidence of delayed salaries in the Division of Quezon City.
- On salary increase. The salary scale of government workers is legislated; the last salary increase was in 2001. The teachers have been paid the salary increase due them, including the supplemental allowance and longevity allowance given by the local government.
- On unpaid loyalty pay, "step increments" and other benefits. Loyalty pay is first paid after 10 years of continuous satisfactory service, and every five years thereafter. According to Tariman, the last loyalty pay was released in 2000; however the letter-writer did not meet the criteria set out in the memorandum issued for that purpose. Those who have qualified for loyalty pay from 2001 to the present will get this particular benefit in the next schedule of payment. On the step increments, the records of our Personnel Division show that most division offices have updated payments.
- On annual medical examination. Every summer of the year, teachers undergo annual medical and dental examination in division offices. However, due to lack of funds, X-ray and urinalysis cannot be provided for free.
- On trainings and workshops. The in-service trainings were funded by the local government of Quezon City and given free of charge.
- On the DepEd uniform. The uniform allowance of P4,000 was given in April. Per DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2007, there is no authorized exclusive distributor or supplier of DepEd uniforms or of textile materials.

We wish to assure the teachers that the department sees to it that all their benefits are given to them. However, due to limited resources and lack of funds, there are exceptional cases, for which we ask consideration and understanding.

—TEODOSIO C. SANGIL JR.,
undersecretary,
Department of Education,
DepEd Complex,
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Gag orders in VAWC cases violate intent of RA 9262

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY DISAPPOINTment and concern with the gag orders issued by judges handling cases that involve domestic violence as defined by Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act).

Those of us who have been working for the protection of women victims for the past 15 years are aware that, oftentimes, when the perpetrator is a rich, powerful and/or well-connected man, the only recourse left for a victim is to seek the intervention of the media and make public the crime being committed.

Powerful men in this country have the means to unduly influence local government officials and even judges. That is why media's role in creating community awareness for the protection of victims of VAWC (violence against women and children) is essential. That is also why the implementing rules and regulations of RA 9262 exempt from liability persons who intervene in behalf of VAWC victims.

The recent gag orders issued by the judges presiding over two prominent VAWC cases are unwarranted. They deprive the media, as well as the public, of their mandate to protect the welfare and lives of victims of domestic violence.

They also promote the mistaken belief that domestic violence is a "private matter" and not a crime against the people. VAWC perpetrators, particularly those whose victims have sought protection from the courts, commit a crime against every Filipino; their criminal acts should not be shielded from public scrutiny.

On the other hand, judges should exert extra effort to protect the victims from being shamed and stigmatized for seeking protection and justice. The petitioner and respondent in VAWC cases, even if they are married to each other, are not on equal grounds. The law must protect the victim, first, foremost and immediately.

I do hope that the media will continue to investigate, intervene and protect victims of VAWC; that they will not be afraid to expose those who abuse their power to inflict suffering on those they have professed love for. I also hope that more judges and justices will soon understand the intention of RA 9262.

—ANNA LEAH SARABIA,
president,
Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan
Foundation Inc. (Kalakasan)

GMA warned of Marcos', Somoza's experience

EVERY TIME THE US WALL STREET IS ON the verge of collapse, a global war breaks out. According to Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, the greatest threat facing America today is not terrorism or foreign economic competition or illegal immigration but the disastrous fiscal policies of its own government, allegedly marked by shameless deficit spending and dollar devaluation. When corporate America fails, the military industrial complex acts to save it. The problem is, it transfers the blame for creating state-sponsored terrorists—like Bin Laden, Ramzi Yousef—from their "operators" to other nation-states.

Allies who, the "establishment" believes, shift their loyalty to their perceived enemy suffer the consequences. Look what happened to Marcos, the Shah of Iran, Noriega of Panama, Diem of Vietnam, Hussein of Iraq, Somoza of Nicaragua, all "American boys" but ousted by their colonial master.

The Nicaraguan experience is very relevant to the Philippine situation today. US Marines were sent to Nicaragua to back up Anastasio Somoza's martial law. But after several years, he became a nationalist and started defying the secret orders of Washington which, in response imposed economic sanctions. Nicaragua experienced an economic slowdown and corruption became endemic. Somoza's military became his sole protector.

The assassination of Joaquin Chamorro, the editor of the anti-Somoza newspaper La Prenza, agitated the restive Nicaraguans. A déjà vu of the Ninoy Aquino assassination and the political killings happening under the Arroyo presidency. Chamorro's death emboldened the Sandinista National Liberation Front to fight the government, with the help of Nicaragua's confused citizenry. Nicaragua became ripe for anarchy and eventually plunged into a civil war.

The Sandinista ousted Somoza and took over the government in 1979. But when the Sandinista gave the Nicaraguans a chance to decide their own future, it got the ire of the US government. The Reagan-Bush administration started funding and arming the "Contra war" to undermine the Sandinista regime.

The Arroyo administration should be wary of this pattern of history, especially now that the President is perceived to be using her China card. Political observers were amazed when the United States and the United Nations warned the Arroyo administration about the ongoing human rights violations and the political killings. There is the perception that the atrocities—which continue despite the President's order to stop them—have the blessing of Malacañang.

Political pundits see both the American and Philippine governments as anti-communists. But why is the US establishment serious in investigating the alleged human rights violations, thus making the leaders of the progressive Left like Rep. Satur Ocampo look like a hero in the mold of Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua?

With a divided military, will history repeat itself?

—ERICK SAN JUAN,
Manila Bank,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

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Panay rebel group faces gun complaints

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—POLICE AND MILITARY OFFICIALS IN WESTERN Visayas said they would file a formal complaint against the rebel group Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) before the peace pact monitoring committee for violations committed during the election period.

Maj. Gen. Jovenal Narcise, commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, cited proofs that the RPA-ABB violated the election gun ban after several of its members and leaders were caught by soldiers and policemen carrying high-powered firearms.

Narcise said the group also threatened and forced residents and the hinterland villages to support certain candidates.

Regional police director Chief Supt. Wilfredo Dulay had earlier said he received complaints from politicians and residents that the RPA-ABB members were extorting money and harassing barangay leaders and villagers to support the candidates.

Narcise and Dulay said they would raise their complaints before the Joint Enforcement Monitoring Committee (JEMC) and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

The five-member JEMC, composed of two representatives from both the government and the rebel group, is tasked with monitoring and oversee the enforcement of provisions of the agreement.

The Army's 79th Infantry Battalion arrested RPA-ABB members in separate incidents in Lauan-an town in Antique and in San Joaquin town in Iloilo several days before the May 14 elections.

The soldiers confiscated five M-16 rifles, one M-14 rifle, one homemade shotgun, two hand grenades and assorted bullets in San Joaquin and two M-16 rifles, one homemade shotgun, four homemade .38 cal. revolvers and bullets in Antique.

Policemen arrested Demetrio Capilistique, alias Ka Hugo, RPA-ABB commander in Panay, and three others at a checkpoint in Sta. Barbara town on May 10.

Recovered from them were two baby Armalite rifles, two .45 cal. pistols, a 9-mm pistol, a .22 cal. hand gun, two hand grenades, three rifle grenades, a bulletproof vest and hundreds of bullets.

Cash amounting to P300,000 was found inside a bag found in the jeepney that the four were riding.

Capilistique and his companions were released after posting bail, but police filed charges of illegal possession of firearms and violation of the gun ban.

Narcise said all the firearms, except for one, had no permits or exemption from the Commission on Elections.

He said the carrying of high-powered firearms by the members of the group violated provisions in the peace agreement that only 100 short firearms were permitted to be carried by RPA-ABB members and leaders and only in areas agreed upon by the government and the group.

Ka Rolly, a member of the Panay regional committee of the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPMP), the political wing of the RPA-ABB, denied committing any violations.

"Our carrying of firearms was within the provisions of the peace pact. They were not displayed and were not used for provocative acts," he said in a telephone interview.

He said it was up to the courts to decide if the election gun ban can superseded the peace agreement on the carrying of firearms.

The RPA-ABB broke away from Communist Party of the Philippines over ideological differences shortly after 1992.

Voters cut reign of 2 political dynasties in Catanduanes

By Fernan Gianan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—Voters have put an end to the Alberto political dynasty and cut short the reign of the Verceles family on the island.

Former Gov. Rosalie Alberto-Estacio only placed third in her bid to succeed her brother, incumbent three-term Mayor Jose Alberto II.

Running under the United Opposition, Estacio garnered 2,342 votes against Vice Mayor Santos Zafe's 15,210.

Mayor Alberto is expected to retire from politics for health reasons. He is the only remaining member of the Alberto dynasty still in power since his uncle, lawyer Juan Alberto, first became governor in 1951, winning by a landslide despite running as an independent.

Juan was later appointed chair of the then powerful Reparations Commission.

He was followed by younger brother Jose, who in 1961, won the first of four successive terms as congressman, bringing to the province huge public works projects and having chaired the House appropriations committee.

In 1967, Juan, who then headed the Government Service Insurance System, was riding an elevator in his office to clear his desk in preparation for another run at the governorship when he was shot dead by an assassin.

Unsolved murder

In October that same year, his youngest brother Vicente ran and won as governor, eventually occupying the Capitol for the next 18 years until he was forced to step down by the post-Edsa administration.

Before martial law was declared in 1972, Representative Alberto's son, Jose Jr., was elected provincial board member and was reelected in 1980.

Times were good for the Albertos, who were in the graces of strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

During the first elections for members of the Interim Batasang Pambansa in 1978, Rep. Jose Alberto ran and won again.

In 1982, Alberto beat diplomat Leandro Verceles Sr. for the right to sit as member of the regular Batasang Pambansa.

The Edsa Revolution in 1986 briefly cut short the Albertos' reign. Verceles becoming governor in the 1987 elections.

Businessman Moises Tapia beat five candidates who included the daughter of former Representative Alberto—lawyer Baba Alberto—for the lone congressional seat of the province.

However, Baba's sister, Rosalie, won as vice governor. Congressman Tapia died in a plane crash months later.

In 1989, the grand old man of Catanduanes politics, Jose "Lesman" Alberto, 67, died after a lingering illness.

In 1992, Rosalie was catapulted to the top provincial post along with brother Cito as Virac mayor, while the elder Verceles managed to install his son, Leandro Jr. as congressman.

In 1995, the entire Alberto slate was wiped out.

Only Cito man aged to return to power in 1998 to serve three straight terms as Virac mayor.

Leandro Jr. eventually served three terms until 2001, when he ran and won as governor.

He was on his way to getting reelected to a third term this month when businessman Joseph Cua defeated him.

Cua was the Verceleses' favorite contractor before he was pushed to run for mayor of San Andres in 2001. Three years later, Cua sided with Santiago for his failed attempt to unseat Leandro Jr.

Former Vice Gov. Teofisto Verceles, who is Leandro Sr.'s brother, headed the municipal government of his native town of Pandan for several terms, along with wife Eulalia.

He lost his bid to return to the same post in the May 14 polls, placing second to the woman his wife had defeated in 2004.

Lawyer Leo Mendoza, a brother-in-law of Governor-elect Cua, also finally put a stop to four consecutive defeats at the mayorship of San Andres to trounce incumbent Dr. Aly Romano.

The mayor's mother, Lydia, also lost her bid for a seat in the provincial board.

Lydia and her husband, Dr. Antonio Romano, had alternately led the town since 1984 before Joseph Cua ventured into politics and ruled for one term from 2001 to 2004.

Political observers say that, save for Verceles Jr., there is no heir apparent in sight for the Alberto and Verceles clans.

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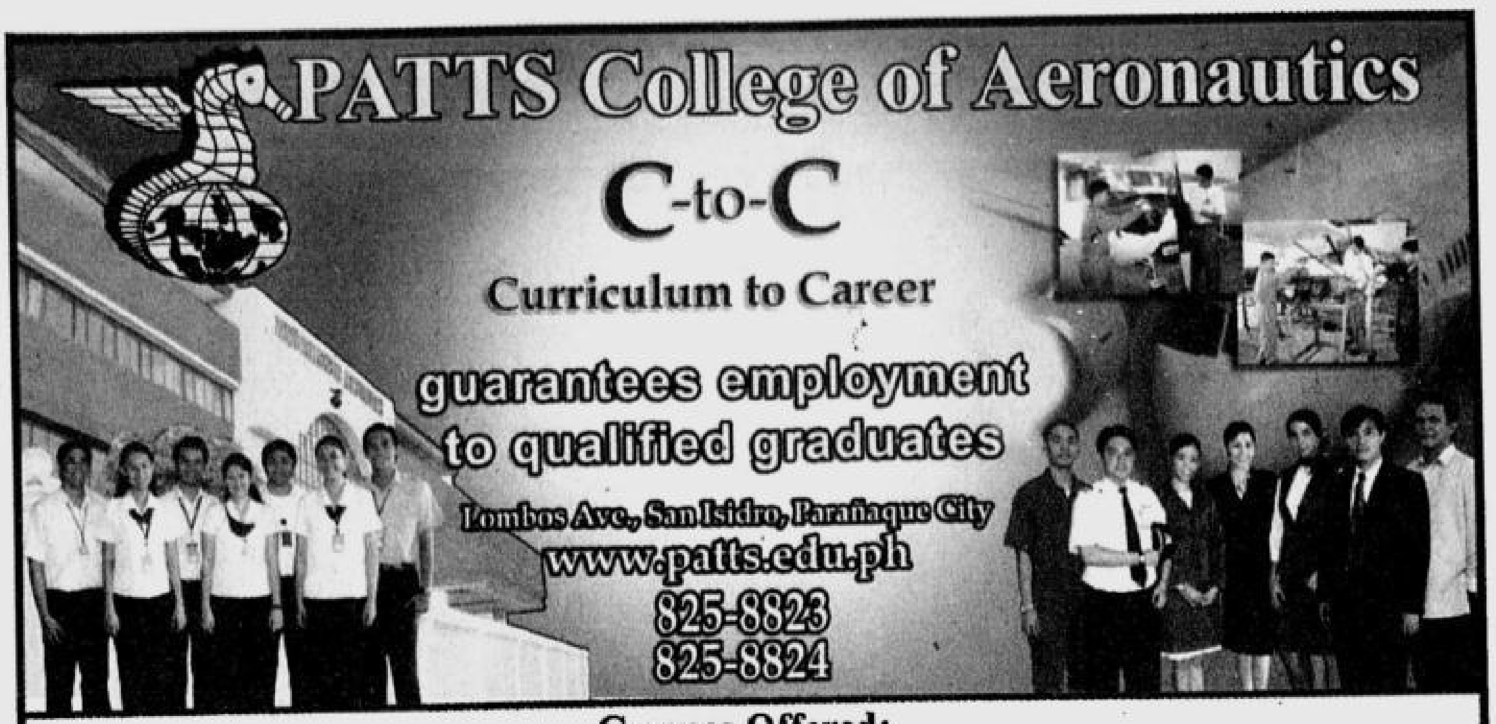
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Parents and children start buying school supplies at the public market in Albay in preparation for the opening of classes this June.

Accept defeat, Leviste urges Ermita, son

By Marlon Alexander Luistro
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BATANGAS CITY—PROVINCIAL BOARD member Mark Leviste yesterday urged Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to tell his son Edwin and other family members to accept defeat in the vice gubernatorial race.

"I hope Secretary Ermita will refrain from interfering in this case since it's obvious that the Ermitas are using their position and influence here. If ever he doesn't intervene, he is in the right position to talk to Edwin and advise him and the family to accept defeat," Leviste told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said he was expecting a favorable decision from the Commission on Elections within a week, together with his proclamation as elected vice governor of Batangas.

Leviste filed a motion before the Comelec on Sunday, asking the poll body to lift its suspension order on his proclamation.

Results

Official Comelec results showed that Leviste won, garnering 334,847 votes, followed by Edwin Ermita, 316,578; actor Christopher de Leon, 150,817; Praxedes Bustamante, 2,006; and Fortunata Magsombol, 665.

Gloria Ramos-Petallo, chair of the provincial board of canvassers (BOC), signed the certificate of votes canvassed.

In May 18, however, Ermita filed before the Comelec a motion to declare a failure of elections in Sto. Tomas and Taysan towns. Commissioner Resurreccion Borra approved the petition at around 4:50 p.m. that day.

Ermita alleged that Leviste and reelectionist Gov. Armando Sanchez violated the Omnibus Election Law—vote buying, burning of public school, and use of government vehicles for placement of campaign materials of their party, Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino.

In an affidavit submitted to the Comelec, a copy of which was furnished the INQUIRER, Leviste said the winning candidates for governor, board members, mayors, vice mayors and councilors had already been proclaimed.

He wondered why the elected vice governor could not be proclaimed. He added that the allegations contained in Ermita's petition were grounds for an electoral protest.

Leviste likewise questioned the authority of Borra to sign the order suspending his proclamation.

"We take note that the order of May 18, 2007 is an 'en banc order.' Under Sec. 5 Rule 2 of the Comelec rules of procedure, it is Chair Benjamin Abalos who signs interlocutory resolutions, orders or rulings," he said.

Appeal

He argued that Borra is the chair of the Comelec's first division, whose authority is to sign interlocutory resolutions, orders or rulings and temporary restraining orders "in cases already assigned to the Division."

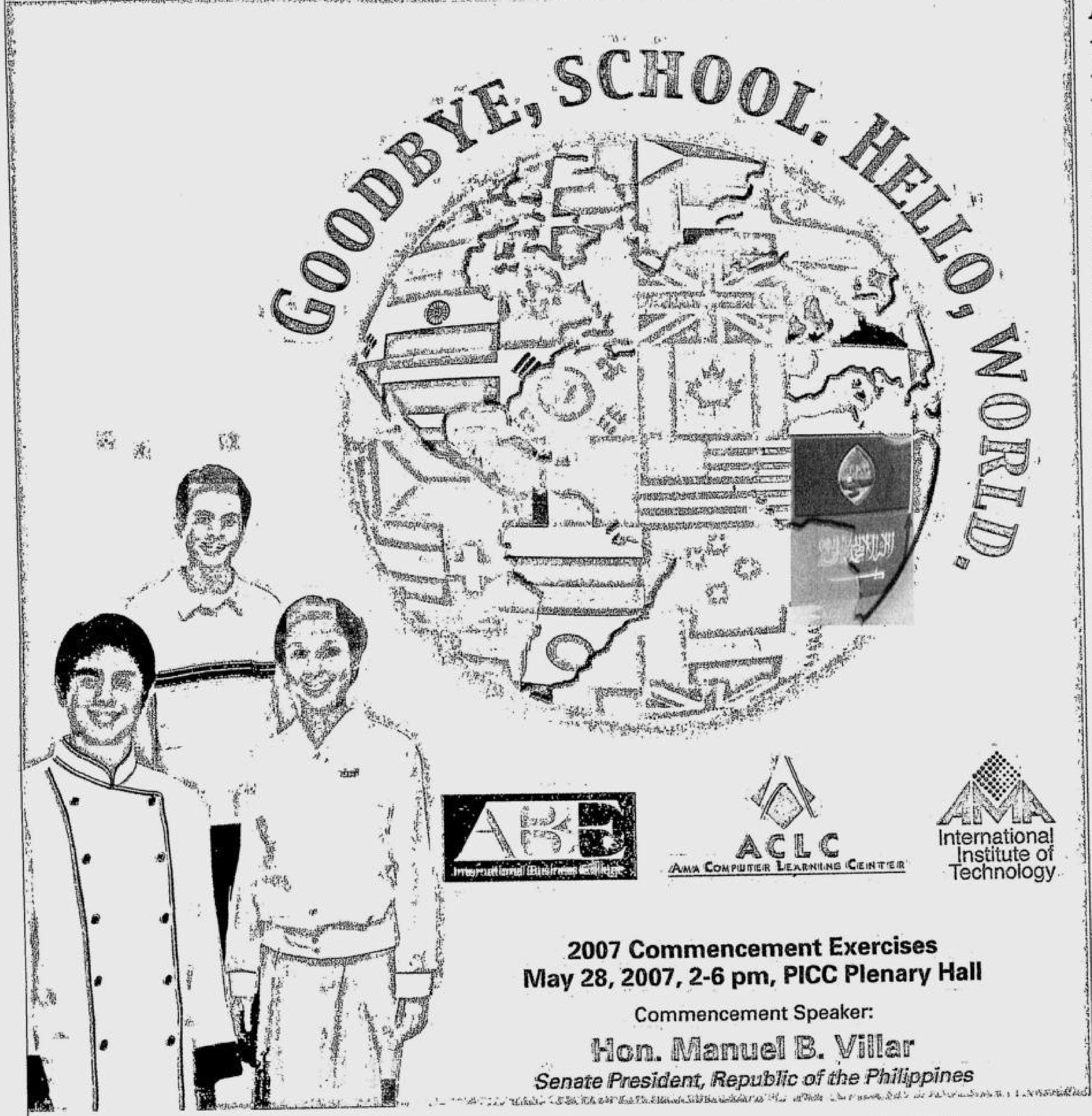
"It seems that there is no particular provision of the Comelec rules of civil procedure authorizing a presiding commissioner of a division to sign for the Comelec *en banc*. With all due respect, the order of suspension of proclamation is not validly issued," Leviste said in his appeal.

During Monday's press conference, Leviste said the Comelec order was issued with undue haste, noting that Borra gave credence to what he claimed as Ermita's baseless allegations without even hearing his side.

"I won and in my humble opinion, I deserve it. The choice of the Batangueños is clear and their will should not be suppressed on the whim of a desperate, disgruntled and sour-graping candidate," he said referring to the young Ermita.

Earlier, the provincial Comelec proclaimed reelectionist Rep. Eileen Ermita–Buhain, daughter of Ermita, winner in the congressional race in the first district.

Ermita-Buhain is a sister of Edwin. The Ermitas have ruled politics in the first district for at least 15 years, dating back to 1992 when Eduardo Ermita was elected congressman.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Bulacan has biggest number of child laborers—ILO

CITY OF MALOLOS—BULACAN'S fireworks industry has the biggest number of child workers, especially in Bocaue and Sta. Maria towns, according to a recent study by the International Labor Organization-Education Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-Ipec).

Linda Wirth, ILO director for Southeast Asian and the Pacific sub-regional office in Manila, said the lack of sustained sources of income of families is the major cause of child labor in the province.

Wirth said this was why the group wanted to provide opportunities and alternative means of livelihood to parents so their children would stop working and instead go to school.

Wirth, along with Brandie Sasser, an official from the US Department of Labor (US-DOL), met with officials of the provincial committee on child labor here on Tuesday to discuss programs in provinces with high incidence of child labor practices and abuses.

They also visited pyrotechnic factories in Sta. Maria and Bocaue.

Serenidad Lavadoa, Ipec's chief technical adviser, said the ILO gave Bulacan, together with Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, Iloilo and Camarines Norte, $5 million to initiate programs that would stop child labor.

Reports of the PCCL showed 1,084 children below 17 years old were working in pyrotechnics factories in Bocaue and Sta. Maria. They included 228 in Bocaue and 856 in Sta. Maria.

During the Christmas and New Year season, unlicensed manufacturers in Bocaue require children aged 17 and below to work to meet the demands of stores and dealers, the reports said.

They said some parents did not undergo safety training in the manufacture of pyrotechnics products.

Through the $5 million given by the UN-ILO, PCCL officials said they were able to send back to school 20 child laborers while their parents were given P5,000 each as seed capital.

Leny del Rosario of the provincial social welfare development office (PSWDO) said she had reactivated the barangay council for the protection of children in 146 villages in Bocaue and Sta. Maria.

Nathaniel Lacambra, director of the Department of Labor and Employment in Central Luzon, said the fireworks industry was among the industries that employed child workers.

Although child laborers are found in the agriculture and entertainment industries, much attention is given to the fireworks industry because of accidental explosions that injured and killed children, Lacambra said. *Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

DENR, NGO want poll bets cited for using 25,000 trees for posters

LAOAG CITY—A nongovernment organization wants candidates found to have nailed campaign posters to trees to plant as many trees as the number of trunks they had tacked.

GOVERNOR
GOVERNOR

A WORKER removes a campaign poster nailed to a tree in Guinobatan, Albay a day after the elections. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

The Green Ilocos Norte Network and Advocacy (Ginna) said more than 25,000 trees along the province's major roads were nailed with campaign paraphernalia during the campaign period despite the law protecting trees from illegal posting.

Shermon Cruz, Ginna president, said the group will tap the local Integrated Bar of the Philippines for assistance in filing cases against violators in time for the next election period.

"If we can't file cases against them, we should make them plant trees equivalent to the number of trunks they nailed," he said.

He said the number of trees where campaign posters were nailed to could go higher if they included village roads in 22 Ilocos Norte towns and this city in the count.

The group tied up with the provincial environment and natural resources office (Penro) in launching the "Sagip Puno, Tanggal Pako" campaign, which involves extracting nails from trees. They started removing nails from the trees on Friday.

Penro chief Juan de los Reyes Jr. said the holes that the nails created could be the entry point of microorganisms that could cause diseases to set in.

"We need to close the gap that the nails created to prevent the setting in of tree diseases and, in the process, heal itself," he said.

He said the Penro had warned habitual violators of illegal posting against repeating the offense.

"We are glad to note that some candidates have apologized while some have complied with the regulation," he said.

He said the protection and management of trees include cutting century-old trees that are found to be "terminally ill."

Trees on their terminal stage are those whose trunks and base are weak and tend to lean, posing danger to motorists.

The Penro has started cutting three of 130 trees that have been identified as terminally ill.

Of the remaining inventory, 13 are due for immediate cutting while the rest could be subjected to tree surgery or pruning.

De los Reyes said the group would save the trees, if this was possible, but cutting was the only practical solution if they posed risk to the public.

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources started assessing the state of century-old trees in the province when a tree fell and crushed and killed a family of five in a van on a national road in Batac town in 2005. *Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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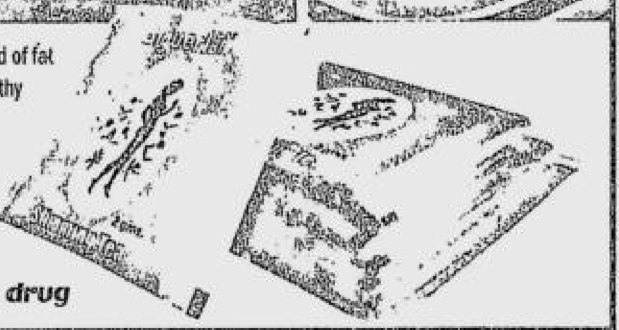

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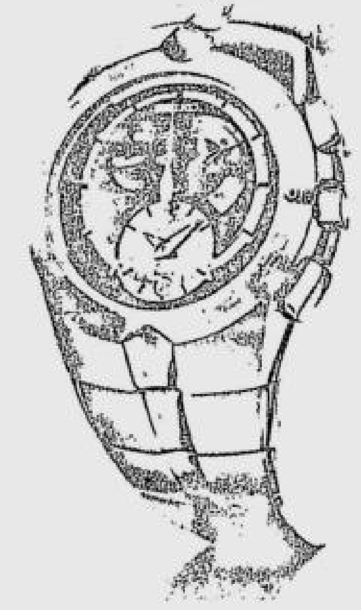

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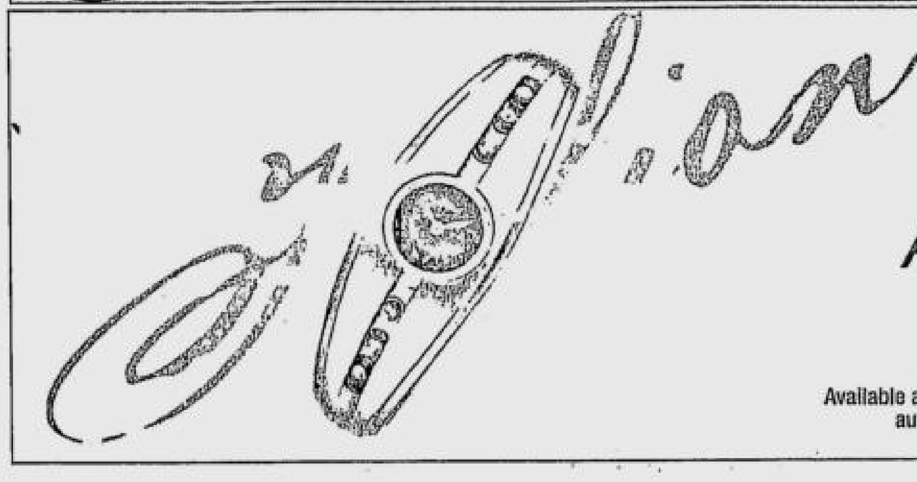

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On 3rd try, voting in town successful

From page A1

in Lanao del Sur where special elections were held over the weekend. Voting could not take place in those areas on May 14 because of threats of violence arising from fierce local political rivalries.

The voting yesterday was generally peaceful, with only two reported cases of shooting—in both instances the shots came from soldiers who fired warning shots to pacify unruly crowds.

Altogether, about 12,000 votes were involved in yesterday's special elections.

The bulk of the voting in this town of 42 precincts took place at the Butig Public Market. Some voted in an elementary school and others at the Butig National High School.

Two previous attempts to hold elections in Butig failed, on May 14 and on Saturday, because most of the public school teachers comprising the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) did not show up. Only six of 126 members of the BEI showed up.

The rest were afraid of being caught in the intense feuds among political rivals who were related to each other.

Teachers scared

"They (the six) said their fellow teachers got sick, or went somewhere else," Commission on Elections special action officer Roy Prule Ediza told the INQUIRER.

The elections finally pushed through after the Comelec deputized 126 police officers to act as election inspectors, in place of the terrified teachers.

The policemen came from the Lanao del Sur police and from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Regional Mobile Group.

Only a handful of them had had experience working as poll inspectors before, provincial police operations officer Chief Insp. Richmond Tadina said.

Early birds

'Most of the policemen were armed with assault rifles when they reported to their precincts at 1:15 p.m. By then, clusters of voters had been waiting.

"It is OK to have policemen as BEIs. We are not afraid. We don't see any problem," said a 20-year-old youth, who gave his name only as Omair. It was his first time to vote.

As poll inspectors, the policemen took over the deserted market stalls, using them as polling precincts, calling out the names of voters one by one, in alphabetical order, while reading from the voters' list.

Some distance away, several volunteers of local candidates were busy distributing campaign leaflets.

A candidate was seen shaking hands with voters in front of the Marawi National High School.

Warning shots

At the market, a policeman shouted profanities at some poll watchers, who wanted to enter a cordoned-off stall being used by the policemen.

"Back off! We are here so the elections will be held!" he shouted.

In Lumba Bayabao, tension rose briefly when soldiers spotted a man carrying a gun. After the man resisted and some people became unruly, the soldiers fired warning shots.

Soldiers patrolled key streets, manning checkpoints, stopping cars and verifying the documents of motorcycles.

Lack of an adequate venue and of tables, chairs and blackboards hampered the start of the count of some 90,000 votes cast in 12 towns during the first day of special elections on Saturday.

Soldiers in full-battle gear backed by armored personnel carriers also guarded the tabulation centers at the Provincial Capitol, the Marawi City National High School and at the People's Park, all in the downtown areas of the Islamic city.

Tabulation center

At the gymnasium behind the Provincial Capitol, some 100 teachers from Masiu were slumped on the floor, printing the names of the local candidates on the tabulation sheets spread out before them.

The gym, converted into a tabulation center, was crowded with teachers, poll watchers from various political parties and candidates, and volunteers from the watchdogs National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), Lente and other civil society groups.

Soldiers manning the door had to bang the metal gate to keep out relatives of candidates and other partisans who wanted to join the crowd inside the gym.

"We have to control the number of watchers and people inside. We cannot allow them all in," said lawyer Dindo Maglasang, a Comelec special action officer.

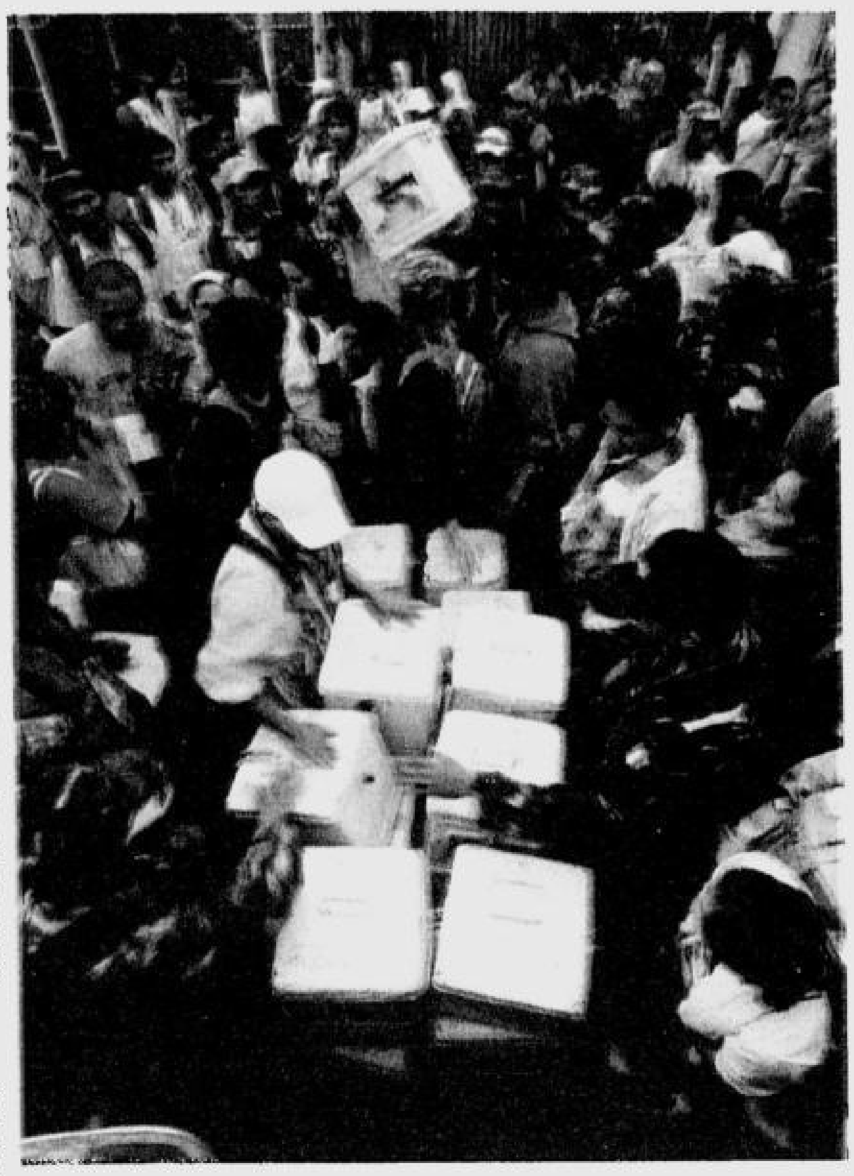
Maglasang, who comes from the Visayas, replaced a Muslim election officer on the eve of the special elections to remove any suspicion of bias he may have for friends seeking public office in Masiu.

The towns in Lanao del Sur where special elections were held over the weekend were Kapai (5,659 registered voters), Lumba Bayabao (9,004), Masiu (10,966), Bayang (9,056), Binidayan (5,466), Kapatagan (7,490), Lumbatan (7, 375), Domalondong (3, 983), Lumbayanague (5,733), Madalum (7,137), Marogong (7,590), Pualas (6,185) and Butig (8,517).

Separate ARMM elections

Hadj Abdullah Dalidig, provincial chair of Namfrel, said it would be better to have a "special schedule" for elections in the entire ARMM, where polls had been ridden with violence and fraud.

By holding the elections in the ARMM separately from the rest of the country, the Comelec could "train its focus on the region," Dalidig said. *With a report from Ryan D. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao*



ARMY soldiers (left) load the ballot boxes into a jeep at around 5:30 p.m. after Saturday's special elections in Madalum town in Lanao del Sur. A Muslim woman (top) shows off her thumb marked with indelible ink after casting her ballot.

PHOTOS BY REM ZAMORA

Sulu teacher surfaces to testify on cheating

From page A1

the record to a member of the media about the fraud she said she saw with her own eyes.

She said she did so in the hope that cheaters would finally stop mocking the electoral system.

"(Otherwise), they will do it over and over again," Alfad said in an interview at the weekend, when asked why she was finally speaking out.

Alfad has filed an affidavit with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as the primary witness of Said Ibrahim Sencio, Kampi vice mayoral candidate in the municipality of Kalingalan Caluang, Sulu.

Sencio has filed charges of election law violations against Habibun Bahjin, the town's election officer; Pakulin Sulaiman, chair of Barangay Pangdan-Pangdan; Minerva Bahjin, the municipal treasurer, and members of the board of election inspectors (BEIs).

In his complaint, Sencio attached several affidavits, including those of more than 300 Pangdan-Pangdan voters who were unable to vote because their precincts were transferred from Pangdan-Pangdan to Barangay Pitogo, 9 kilometers away, on the eve of the elections.

Sencio himself was unable to vote, and later learned he received zero votes in his home village of Pangdan-Pangdan, one of the nine barangays in Kalingalan Caluang.

It was only after he had spoken to Alfad, the BEI chair of Pangdan-Pangdan's Precinct 36-A, that he learned what had taken place on Election Day.

In her affidavit, Alfad said she saw barangay chair Sulaiman, some of his relatives and the BEIs filling out ballots intended for voters in four barangays.

Cheating done in a house

They did it in a small private house in Pitogo, she said.

According to Alfad, she and the BEIs were forced by Sulaiman's group to proceed to the house—instead of to the elementary school where the election precincts were located—after they got the ballot boxes and other election paraphernalia from municipal treasurer Bahjin at the municipal hall.

They arrived at the house at around 4 o'clock in the morning.

Sulaiman asked for the keys to open the four padlocked ballot boxes, took out the official ballots and the other paraphernalia.

"*Sabi nila, 'Ma'm, magpahinga ka na. Kami nang lahat ang gagawa.' Wala talaga ako magawa* (They said, 'Ma'm, take your rest. We'll do everything.' There was nothing I could do)," Alfad said.

Dirty fingers

Alfad said she and another BEI—a man—stayed outside the house but they could see what was happening inside.

Aside from filling out the ballots, Sulaiman's group also placed thumb marks on each one, as well as on the voter's registration book.

"They used all their fingers, that's why their hands were already blackened with ink," Alfad said.

The group finished at around 11:30 a.m. Sulaiman then asked Alfad to affix her signature to all the ballots and the voter's registration book.

She said she didn't have time to look at the names of the candidates written on the ballots, but did remember seeing the names of "Defensor" and "Cayetano," as well as the name of Sencio's rival, Gery Missuari.

Later in the day, they took a bus to the Mindanao State University in Jolo where the "votes" would be counted and canvassed.

"They read out and tallied the votes in one of the classrooms at the MSU, completed the election return for my precinct and then asked me to sign it," Alfad said.

Alfad, a 42-year-old mother of three, said she was never harmed or threatened—except that Sulaiman asked her to keep quiet about the whole thing.

Thumbs-up sign

Alfad said that after the elections, she saw one of those who filled out the ballots in Jolo.

The person gave her a thumbs-up, Alfad said.

Alfad said she was not scared of telling the truth. She also stressed she was never offered anything by Sencio in return for being a witness in his case.

Alfad, a substitute teacher in adult literacy, said that she had served in a total of six local and barangay elections, including this year's midterm elections.

She said she had witnessed all sorts of fraud in the past—from flying voters to using the names of dead people in voting.

And Alfad has had enough.

'Am telling the truth'

"I'm not scared, for myself or my family because I am only telling the truth," Alfad said.

She said her husband, a farmer, warned her of the possible repercussions of her exposé and told her to take care.

"I'm just praying to the Almighty God to protect me," she said.

The Comelec has deferred the canvassing of the CoC from Sulu.

A SOLDIER guards a ballot box in Butig, Lanao del Sur. REM ZAMORA

GMA legitimacy up in special Lanao del Sur elections

From page A1

pine National Police in trying to ensure that the elections are free and honest.

The Lanao polls, unlike most of our elections, put the country on the spot on whether we can ever conduct an honest vote in Mindanao.

This also explains why the Arroyo administration's political machinery is making a last-ditch concentration of deployment of its immense patronage resources to change the national vote outcome as reflected in the Senate results.

The Lanao elections are set against the murky background of the fact that the Comelec has deferred the tabulation of the certificates of canvass (CoCs) from 27 towns of Maguindanao, pending verification of the authenticity of their election returns (ERs).

This deferment made 'the results from the province, with 330,000 votes, even more uncertain, given that early returns from there showed a 12-0 sweep by the administration's Team Unity (TU) senatorial team.

While the Namfrel tabulation as of the weekend showed an 8-2-2 result, the Comelec canvass on Saturday showed a 7-3-2 result, led by Genuine Opposition (GO) candidates.

Pivotal vote

The TU gained one more slot (in addition to Senators Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo) in the Comelec count after Juan Miguel Zubiri dislodged the GO's Aquilino Pimentel III from 12th place following tabulation of returns from the administration's bailiwick, Cebu, with 1.3 million votes.

This means that the last three places will remain under contention until all the CoCs are counted, that the final outcome will not be forthcoming within the next two weeks, and this makes the results of the Lanao elections even more pivotal.

The battle over the Lanao votes is underlined by the fact that the Arroyo administration has tried to focus public attention on the results of the House of Representatives and local elections as the accurate indicator of its claimed fresh mandate from the nation at large, rather than the Senate election.

Losses in Metro Manila

The Senate results are the outcome the Arroyo administration would rather not see and would like the rest of the nation to ignore to substantiate its claim that it had received a vote of confidence on the strength of local results.

The local results show that administration candidates won 73 out of 81 governors' positions, 203 out of 219 congressional seats, and 109 out of 119 city mayorships.

Those results are countered by the capture by the GO of key and politically strategic cities, most of all Manila, Makati and Naga cities.

The administration lost Manila with the defeat of Mayor Lito Atienza's son, Ali, by Sen. Alfredo Lim as reelectionist Mayor Jejomar Binay scored a landslide win in Makati, the center of the opposition in Metro Manila. These two triumphs have broadened the opposition base in Metro Manila, reducing the electoral importance of a third key city, Quezon City, which returned Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte as mayor.

Political map redrawn

These strategic shifts more than made up for the victory of administration candidates in the lesser cities of Metro Manila, where the opposition predictably retained control of San Juan, bailiwick of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Even on the level of local and House elections, the poll results show the political map nationwide has been redrawn to indicate the weakened control by President Macapagal-Arroyo on key local electorates. The erosion of this base does not warrant confidence that the President is secure from renewed impeachment attempts in the next Congress, or from urban unrest, given that both Manila and Makati are now in opposition hands.

GMA claim undermined

The redrawn map, taken together with the Mindanao results in determining the final outcome of the Senate vote, undermines the President's thesis that the local election results have defined decisively the issue of her renewed mandate to govern the way she has been ruling.

If we examine more closely the changes in the local election results, it becomes obvious that the mandate as a vote of confidence from the local results is at best hollow and a delusion.

The Senate elections are decided on overarching national issues, giving the results there a strong national character. They aggregate the issues, which local elections do not.

These midterm elections have offered us two visions or interpretations of the national mandate and the magnitude of the devastating disaster that hit the administration.

Question of legitimacy

This is why Ms Arroyo is fighting tooth and nail to change the final outcome through the Lanao del Sur vote, and why that election is so tremendously important to us. The outcome there transcends the issue of whether she can be impeached or not.

It's more fundamental than that. It boils down to her legitimacy, based on winning an election honestly.

How the integrity of the Lanao del Sur vote is protected and how the elections there are won or lost is crucial to whether this country will have civil peace in the remaining years of the Arroyo presidency.

Kiram places 2nd in Marawi; Legarda No. 1

From page A1

Aquino III (GO), Alan Cayetano (GO), Antonio Trillanes IV (GO), Manuel Villar (GO), Miguel Zubiri (TU) and Joker Arroyo (TU).

Kiram, who belongs to the royal Muslim family in Sulu, earlier wondered how the Ilocano candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson, could have topped the senatorial race in Maguindanao.

Kiram ranked 12th in Maguindanao, a part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The voting in Maguindanao where all the TU candidates landed in the winning circle was marred by cheating, according to the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Comelec, Namfrel tallies

Special elections were held on Saturday in 13 towns in Lanao del Sur, but the counting had yet to begin as of Sunday morning.

As of Saturday night, seven GO candidates, three TU candidates and two independents were in the winning circle in the tally by the Commission on Elections. Zubiri dislodged Pimentel from the 12th slot.

In the Namfrel count, also on Saturday night, GO kept its eight slots, TU its two slots, and the independents, two slots.

As of 5:52 p.m. on Saturday, with election results counted in 79.94 percent of the 224,748 precincts, Legarda continued to lead the pack. Trailing her were Escudero, Lacson and Villar (11,609.985).

Aquino dislodged Pangilinan in the fifth slot.

They were followed by Edgardo Angara, Cayetano, Gregorio Honasan, Arroyo, Trillanes and Pimentel III.

Milestone

Those in the 13th to 15th slots were Zubiri, Ralph Recto and Michael Defensor, respectively.

"Our people in the field have already transmitted their tabulations of the ERs to our system, representing 84 to 85 percent of the precincts. But these have yet to be processed (validated and verified)," Namfrel secretary general Eric Alvia said.

Quite a feat for a group that had been roundly criticized for "trending" and not completing its count in the aftermath of the controversial 2004 presidential vote.

"If you consider the 84 to 85 percent [coverage], we've already exceeded our performance," Alvia said. "This is a milestone. We're happy with our performance."

With the ERs from more than 80 percent of the precincts collected, Namfrel will start to scale down its operations and move from the gym to a smaller room, also in La Salle Green Hills in Mandaluyong City, according to Alvia.

Both the Comelec and Namfrel took the day off yesterday.

Backed by an "antifraud infrastructure," the opposition yesterday expressed confidence that teamwork among its lawyers, volunteers and candidates could stop attempts to rig the canvassing.

"More or less, we have an idea of the result ... Its going to be 8-2-2 (for GO), and they (TU) cannot touch that unless there will be cheating," said Sixto Brillantes, lawyer of the United Opposition which is part of the GO.

Brillantes said the GO's antifraud network, organized at the municipal and national levels, was ready with its copies of vote tallies from provinces and cities to question the canvass of tabulations from areas where manipulation had been observed.

For one, he said, GO would move to question today's scheduled canvass of the North Cotabato to certificate of canvass (CoC), which he said may well have been manipulated.

"We are already reviewing our documents (vote tallies) from North Cotabato ... We know that the CoC would show that it was padded," Brillantes told the INQUIRER.

He and individual lawyers of opposition candidates had sought the deferment of the canvassing of the CoCs of Maguindanao and South Cotabato, where he said there was padding for TU candidates, Pangilinan, and even the GO's own Legarda.

Citing proof from the GO's copies of South Cotabato's vote tallies, Brillantes said more than 100,000 votes were added to Prospero Pichay, Recto, Defensor, Angara and Arroyo.

"Their style is to get votes from their own candidates, who no longer have a chance [of reaching the top 12], so that, despite the padding, the total will not exceed the number of voters who actually voted," said Brillantes.

He said the TU was moving to push the consistent cliffhangers, Zubiri, Recto and Pichay, into the winning slots and dislodge GO candidates.

It might be too late for the TU to manipulate the votes as the GO has copies of provincial and city tallies, documents which can be used as basis to prove election rigging, according to Brillantes.

With the arrival of votes from Cebu on Saturday, Pimentel was pulled from No. 12 and traded places with 14th-placer Zubiri for the last slot.

GO spokesperson Adel Tamano said Pimentel would reclaim the 12th spot as soon as CoCs from Quezon City and Manila were canvassed.

"We're not worried at all about Koko because the Quezon City and Manila CoCs have yet to be counted and these are very strong areas for the opposition," Tamano said.

Aide says Madrigal paid for Trillanes' campaign ads

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM THE CAMPAIGN TO THE canvassing, Sen. Jamby Madrigal has gone all out in her support of Antonio Trillanes IV, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition (GO).

Madrigal said she had actively pushed for the deployment of poll watchers to guard Trillanes' votes.

"We are helping Trillanes in guarding his votes and ensure that the people's will is respected. We helped mobilize volunteers for the canvassing in Namfrel and in the special elections in Lanao del Sur as well," Madrigal said.

Trillanes' barging into the top 12 since the counting began has surprised not a few political observers considering that he never figured very well in the pre-election surveys.

Silent majority

But Madrigal said: "I am not surprised by the strong showing of Trillanes in the current count of both the Comelec and Namfrel. Before I endorsed him, I knew for a fact that a silent majority of Filipinos supported him."

This was the reason the leader of the mutinous Magdalo group that stormed the Oakwood Hotel in Makati City in 2003 had his campaign that mostly ran on a shoestring budget get a much-needed boost in the last few days before the May 14 elections.

"The public was not aware that he was running for the Senate. I then took the first step of publicly endorsing him in media advertisements to raise the people's awareness and eventually convert this to votes," said Madrigal.

An aide to Madrigal said the senator bankrolled Trillanes' TV ads that ran on one of the country's giant broadcast stations.

Without conditions

Madrigal said she supported Trillanes "without any conditions."

She said she visited Trillanes in his cell "thrice" during the campaign.

"We had extensive discussions on governance, history and the sad state of politics today. [Should he win a seat] in the Senate, we both agreed to work on a common agenda against traditional and partisan politics and on a reform agenda that places the interest of the Filipino first before anything else. It is time we give back to the Filipino people what is due them. We will walk our talk," Madrigal said.

NEW ZEALAND TRIP. President Macapagal-Arroyo waves to well-wishers before leaving for New Zealand and Australia at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

GMA starts state visits ...

From page A1

Philippine Airlines flight to Wellington, where she is due to meet with Prime Minister Helen Clark and attend an interfaith dialogue in New Zealand's birthplace, Waitangi.

The Philippine Air Force Honor Guard gave Ms Arroyo foyer honors in the gallery of Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2 as she walked to her plane escorted by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Among those who saw Ms Arroyo off were Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Speaker Jose de Venecia and New Zealand Chargé d'Affaires Steve McCombie.

Chartered flight

The entourage of some 100 VIPs had the 306-seat Airbus 330 all to themselves when the chartered PAL Flight PR-001 left Manila at around 5 p.m. yesterday. PAL does not have commercial flights to New Zealand.

Officials and their New Zealand counterparts were expected to sign security, tourism and business deals, including one that would bolster the Philippine export of automotive parts.

On May 30, Ms Arroyo is expected to fly to Australia for a two-day visit to meet with Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

Status of Forces accord

The Philippines and Australia are set to seal the Status of Forces Agreement, a defense accord that "will help professionalize the Philippine Armed Forces, provide new equipment and strengthen our fight against terrorism," Ms Arroyo said in a departure statement Malacañang issued yesterday.

Manila's status of forces agreement with Washington, called the Visiting Forces Agreement, had been criticized following the detention of a US Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman at the US Embassy instead of a Philippine jail.

The Philippine Constitution prohibits the presence of foreign troops unless covered by a treaty, and bars them from local combat.

Counter terror training

Australia has provided limited counterterrorism training to Philippine security forces under military assistance programs, but it wants to play a bigger role, stressing that reducing threats in the Philippines would benefit Australia and the region.

"This week, we travel south to visit our friends and staunch allies in New Zaland and Australia. These two great nations are partners of the Philippines in expanded trade, increased security cooperation and closer cultural relations," Ms Arroyo said.

Traveling with Ms Arroyo were Trade Secretary Peter Favila, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Sen. Miriam Santiago and several lawmakers.

"In Australia and New Zealand, we will once again be advancing our economics as well as security interests through meetings with private investors and businesses interested in locating in the Philippines," Ms Arroyo said.

Rome next

Ms Arroyo's departure followed her visit to Japan last week, where she said she obtained "more private investments, more government aid, and greater support for peace and security to our nation."

On her return to the country on June 1, Ms Arroyo would just rest for a day and then fly to Rome on June 2 for an official visit.

"The Philippines must continue to aggressively engage the world in order to modernize the nation, bolster our security and attract new investments to lift up our poor," she said. *With a report from AP*

'Dragon lady' maids feared in Malaysia

From page A1

The Malaysian Chinese Association, the second largest political party in Malaysia representing the minority ethnic Chinese, is part of the ruling coalition.

Home Affairs Minister Radzi Sheikh Ahmad on Friday said the government was considering bringing in domestic workers from China and India to alleviate a shortage of housemaids from Indonesia and the Philippines.

"Following intensive discussions, (we are) appealing to the Home Affairs Ministry to halt this plan for the moment. We do not want the problem of these little dragon ladies to escalate," Ng was quoted as saying.

Family disharmony

"These women are enticing local married men into having affairs with them and are causing family disharmony," she said.

Ng said she would press Radzi over the matter, adding the move was not meant to disrespect women from China but to protect local women and family values in Malaysia.

Ng and home ministry officials could not be reached for comment on Sunday.

Women's groups say the government must address the reason foreign domestic workers are not keen to work in Malaysia.

"We have low labor standards, there are no compulsory days off, wages are low and workers are not properly protected," Women's Aid Organization director Ivy Josiah told The Star newspaper.

Malaysia relies heavily on foreign laborers for menial work, and Indonesians form the bulk of the domestic workforce. More than 300,000 Indonesian currently work as housemaids in the country.

About 20,000 of the maids are Filipinos, but they are paid almost three times the average because of their English language abilities.

Low wages

Radzi earlier said Indonesian maids were shunning Malaysia because of low wages. An average of 1,000 Indonesian maids enter Malaysia each month, but the number has recently dropped "quite a lot," according to the home minister.

"The maids have not been encouraged by the Indonesian agents to come here. They also believe that our wages are much less than offered by other countries, such as Hong Kong and Singapore," he said.

Radzi said Indonesian maids were paid an average of 400 ringgit (US$114) a month in Malaysia, but could make more than twice that amount in neighboring Singapore.

Indonesian agents have also complained they earn only an estimated profit of 460 ringgit (US$135) from each maid, compared to 630 ringgit (US$185) made by a Malaysian agent.

The reduced availability of Indonesian maids has led to some Malaysian employers paying agents up to 6,000 ringgit (US$1,765) to recruit a maid, compared to around 3,500 ringgit (US$1,176) recommended by the government.

Radzi said he would meet soon with Indonesian labor authorities to see how they could best resolve the issue.

He said Malaysia was turning to other countries such as India, Laos, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Vietnam, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan for maids. *AP*

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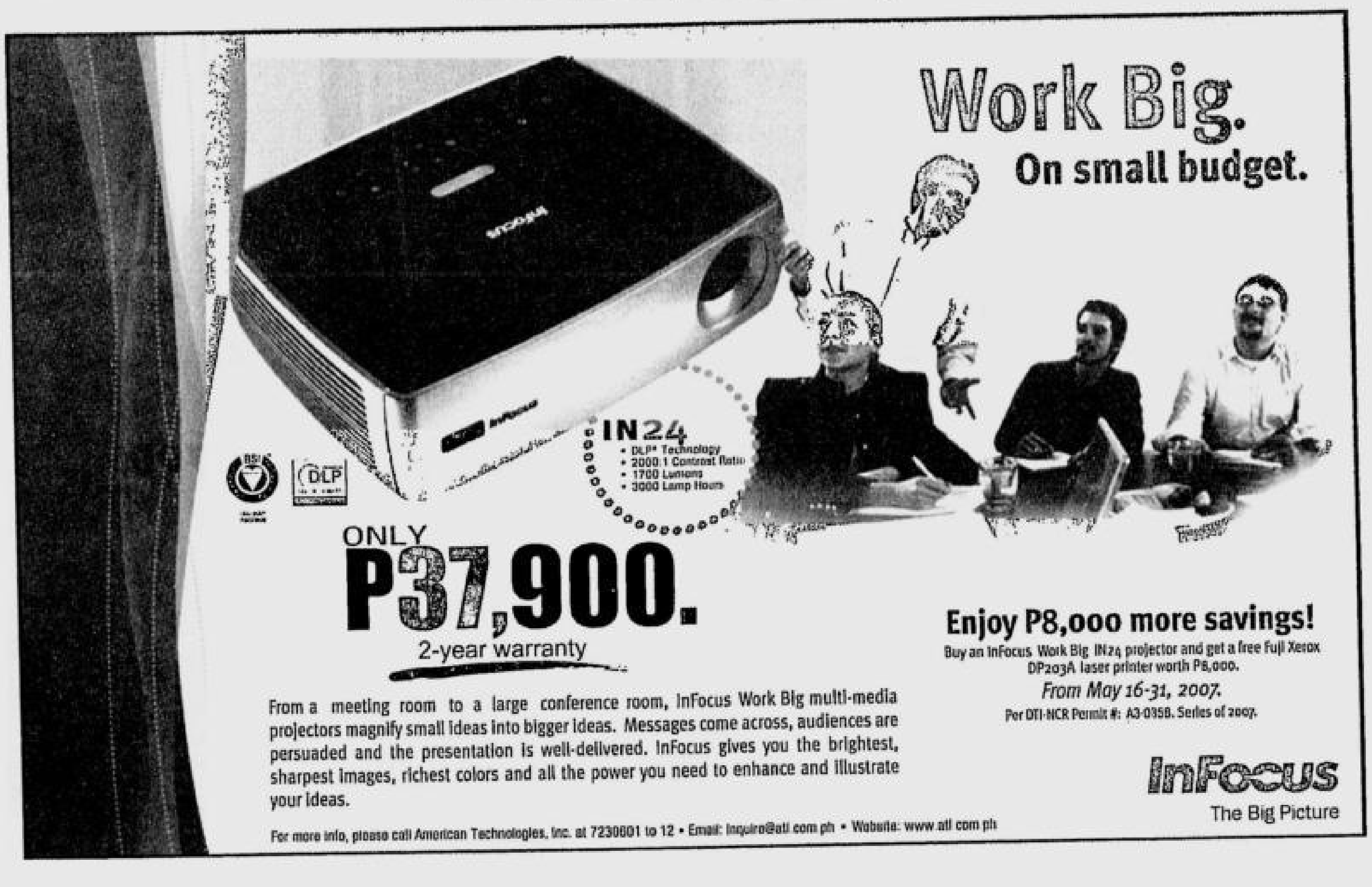

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MALAYSIAN defenders gang up on Jayjay Helterbrand.

RP five rips Malaysia, seals Fiba Asia deal

By Francis Ochoa

RATCHABURI, THAILAND—FACED WITH the biggest deficit of six points thus far—the Nationals looked as if they were about to have their hands full against a rough, hot-shooting Malaysian squad.

Renren Ritualo didn't think so.

With RP-San Miguel struggling to buy baskets early in the first half, Ritualo gave it to the team wholesale, draining five straight triples that paved the way for a 102-72 victory in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) men's championship Sunday and a slot at an Olympic-qualifying tournament in July.

"It's mission accomplished," said National coach Chot Reyes, whose wards sealed their trip to the Fiba Asia men's championship in Japan with their third straight win in as many outings at the Ratchaburi gymnasium here. "We came here with a specific mission of making it to Japan and we've achieved that."

The qualifier for the 2008 Beijing Olympics is set in Tokushima which this pricey team built out of millionaire superstars hopes to make as its final stop.

RP-San Miguel qualified for the Tokushima joust this July with a 44.7 winning margin thus far.

But until Ritualo, the quicksilver 5-foot-11 deadshot waxed hot, it didn't look like the Philippines was going to beat yet another hapless foe into a shapeless lump. Malaysia pounced on three misses by the Nationals to take an early 6-0 lead behind the streaky K. Satyaseelan.

Enrico Villanueva ended the drought with a barreling basket and leading scorer Mark Caguioa provided enough of a spark to allow the RP-San Miguel five to grab a 21-19 lead at the end of a quarter it couldn't seem to put a rein on.

And then came the second period and Ritualo.

The former La Salle superstar drained his first five attempts from beyond the arc against a zone defense that seemed to busy itself setting up camp in the low blocks.

And in the wink of an eye, the Filipinos were up, 44-25, on the last of those first-half treys by Ritualo, who wound up making nine triples to lead the team with 27 points.

STANDINGS	W	L
RP-SMC	2	0
Malaysia	2	1
*Indonesia	1	1
*Thailand	1	1
Singapore	0	3

*Playing at presstime

GAMES TODAY
(*Thailand time*)
2 p.m.—Singapore vs Indonesia
6 p.m.—Thailand vs RP-San Miguel

"I just wanted to contribute to the team, provide it with quality minutes," said the Talk 'N Text standout in the PBA, who was averaging 10.5 markers in his first two games.

"That's why Renren is here, that's what he gives us," said Reyes. "Whether he plays two or 20 minutes, his level of preparedness is always at a high."

Ritualo's scorching performance rubbed off on his teammates.

Jimmy Alapag, Caguioa and Mick Pennisi contributed to the onslaught from way out in the perimeter as the Philippines made 16 triples for the night, two more than the team's combined output in the first two games.

The Philippines sets out to accomplish its other goal for the tournament—winning the title of the event also known here as the Crown Prince Cup—when it battles host Thailand today. The Thais were playing a crucial match against Indonesia at presstime.

Thailand was hoping to win over Indonesia by more than five points to make it as the second Japan qualifier in case three teams fall into a 2-2 tie for second. An Indonesia win will send the Indons to the Fiba-Asia tilt.

The scores:

RP-SAN MIGUEL 102—Ritualo 27, Caguioa 20, Seigle 14, Alapag 9, Taulava 9, Helterbrand 7, Pennisi 6, De Ocampo 4, Villanueva 4, Canaleta 2, Raymundo 0, Hontiveros 0.

MALAYSIA 72—Satyaseelan 23, Guganeswaran 14, Koh 10, Chai 8, Chee 7, Soo 6, Chan 2, Ng 2, Loh 0, Chow 0, Tong 0, Tan 0.

Quarters: 21-19, 53-36, 76-51, 102-71

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*Subject for bank's approval. See flyers for details.

NOKIA

DAHIL SMART TAYO

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1982. Series of 2007.

Asian cage stint consumes Seigle

By Francis Ochoa

RATCHABURI, THAILAND—TWO THINGS excite Danny Seigle nowadays.

One is the thought of the Philippines nailing that cherished Olympic slot.

The other? Finally getting a chance to strut his wares in the Asian scene.

"I'm so motivated to play," said the 6-foot-7 forward of San Miguel Beer.

Quite understandably.

Seigle had his first chance to represent the country in the 2002 Asian Games in the South Korean port city of Busan and prepared a whole year to don the national colors. But then came that unfortunate incident during an exhibition game against Qatar, just a few weeks before the team was to depart for the Asiad.

"I remember that day so clearly," said Seigle said. "I was backpedaling and just as I went up to go for a block, I felt a rush of pain in my leg. Right there, I knew I ruptured my Achilles (tendon)."

Small wonder the sweet-shooting, high-leaping forward has been one of the hardest workers in the RP-San Miguel squad.

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LAST DAYS OF SUMMER
JOAN BONDOC
Children enjoy the last few days of their summer vacation by playing on the Tumana River in Marikina City which is full of water lilies.

Carol Jimenez not angry at husband Mark

By DJ Yap

CAROL CASTAÑEDA-JIMENEZ counted the days inside her cramped, windowless quarters by making marks on the wall, "like a prisoner."

The estranged wife of former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez could only tell it was night or day by stepping on the toilet seat and peering into the sky through a tiny opening, or listening to the sound of boys playing basketball outside.

"She kept her ears close to the door, hoping to hear her rescuers any second. On the ninth day, she began to lose hope," her lawyer Lorna Kapunan said, recalling Carol's ordeal two days after her dramatic "rescue."

On Friday night, on orders of a Pasig City court, agents of the National Bureau of Investigation raided the Silvercrest Foundation in Las Piñas City to retrieve Carol, who had been confined to the drug rehabilitation center since May 16.

"She's somewhere safe," Kapunan said in a phone interview yesterday, although she would not give other details about Carol's whereabouts.

Kapunan said Carol still seemed to be in shock over what happened, but she was in a "spiritual" frame of mind. "Carol is not mad at Mark. She still believes that her husband is a good person," she added.

Kapunan also dismissed the statement of Mark's lawyer, Frank Chavez, that they would file kidnapping charges against Carol's rescuers.

"It was not only the Pasig Regional Trial Court that ordered the rescue. It was the Supreme Court, through Senior Deputy Court Administrator Zenaida Elepaño and upon orders of Chief Justice Reynato Puno, that instructed the Pasig court to issue the rescue order," she added.

During her stay at Silvercrest, a facility co-owned by Diana Crespo, a niece of Mark, Carol was "cut off from the outside world. She could not read newspapers or watch television," Kapunan said.

"Her only contact was Mark, who kept calling her using the security guard's cell phone, and his calls seemed intended for psy-war (psychological warfare)," she added.

"He told her no one would help her anymore, that I, her lawyer, had backed down and that he had made arrangements with the judges," Kapunan said.

Following their mother's rescue, Virgilio Crespo, Mark's son, told the INQUIRER that they were taking steps to put their father under psychiatric care.

"We're pleading for my father to get help," he said. Earlier, Crespo and his siblings came out with a one-page statement in newspapers in which they said they feared for their father's mental state. *With Kristine L. Alave*

25 families lose houses in fire

By Kristine L. Alave

A BLAZE GUTTED A ROW OF SHANTIES IN Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City, yesterday morning, displacing around 25 families, the city fire department reported.

F01 Salvador Norbete said the fire started in the house rented by Almira Lumayon on Agustin Street at about 10:05 a.m.

Initial investigation revealed that Lumayon's child was playing with matches which could have led to the fire, he added.

According to the official, there were no reported deaths or injuries in the blaze which was put out at 10:35 a.m.

Damage to property was estimated at around P100,000, he added.

Norbete said responding firemen would have put out the fire much earlier if their fire truck was not blocked by supporters of defeated Pasig City mayoral candidate Robert "Dodot" Jaworski.

DID YOU KNOW

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange is a private organization that ensures an efficient market for the buying and selling of securities. It was formed in December 1992 with the unification of the Manila and Makati Stock Exchanges. The Manila Stock Exchange, founded in March 1927, was one of the oldest in Asia.

PSE's main office is located at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City. It has an extension office on Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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0918-8985566

Manila Water airs side

WE REFER to the photo taken by Ryan Lim with the caption, "Water Gone to Waste" which appeared in the Metro section on May 21, citing the concern of Mr. Nestor Lim about a water pipe on Banlat Road at the corner of Pearl Street on Tandang Sora Avenue which allegedly has been leaking for more than a year now. The alleged leak actually comes from a clogged drainage which has always been mistaken for a water pipe leak. In fact, Manila Water has been helping the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Flood Control Group and Quezon City Engineering Office to declog the drainage. Since last year, Manila Water has declogged this drainage twice and is now declogging it again. Manila Water continues to embark on a massive service improvement program all over the East Concession area to ensure that water, precious as it is, is not lost through leaks and other means. Rest assured that Manila Water will continue to put priority on ensuring that water is not wasted, so that it reaches our customers even at the farthest end of our service area.

JERIC T. SEVILLA JR., Manila Water corporate communications and sustainable development manager

Motorists' headache

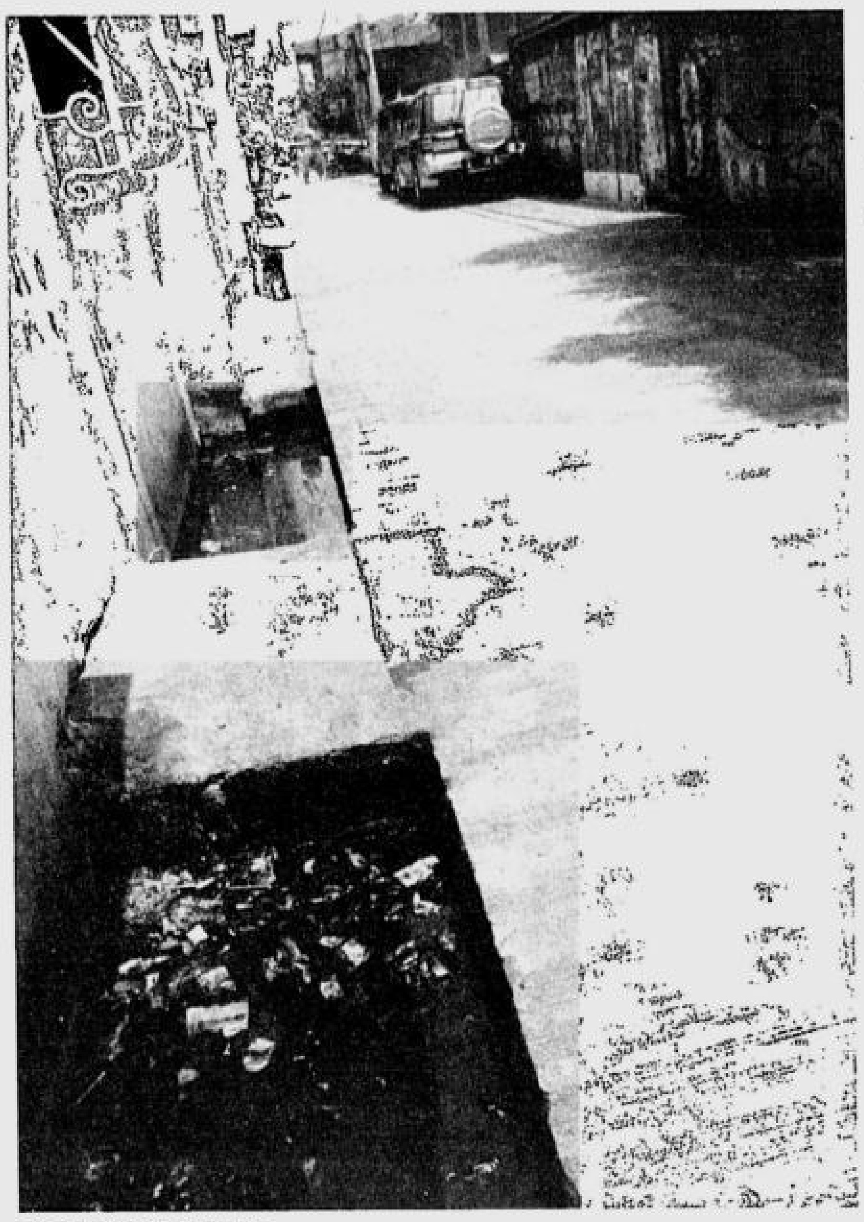
THE STREET in front of the Meralco office and a Bank of the Philippine Islands branch near the fire station in Makati City has been in a state of disrepair for several years now. Since I pass this street every day, I know what motorists have to go through each time they take this route. Can we ask the authorities to please do something about this?

AURORA CRUZ, 67, Salcedo, Makati City

No need to repair road in Parañaque City

I AM WONDERING why workers are digging up and recementing the west service road toward Merville Subdivision in Parañaque City. The road is in very good state! Perhaps they could have repaired some other roads instead of this thoroughfare which is definitely passable.

SKEE TAMAYO, 56, Parañaque City



HEALTH HAZARD

From Rory Cruz, 68, Hulo, Malabon City: "The open canal on Pascual Street is full of garbage. We clean our side of the canal every day, but the following morning, it is full of trash again. The residents simply don't care that this is not only an environment but also a health problem. The street is at the back of our house, so you can just imagine the stench and health hazards our family is exposed to daily. Help!"

RUDY ESPERAS

Undisciplined drivers

MOTORISTS ignore the traffic light at Pedro Gil corner Roxas Boulevard close to the Baywalk area. Please ask the authorities concerned to fix this problem of undisciplined drivers and violators of simple traffic rules. Thank you.

MARK, 19, Paco, Manila

Flyover needed

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority takes no cognizance of the fact that opening a new flyover would eliminate a huge traffic buildup at the Marcos bridge.

Rey Bolinao, 61, Cainta

A Flores de Mayo for the young at heart

By Jeannette I. Andrade

GILDA Quizon, 78, looks every inch a queen as she leads the annual Mayo de Flores procession for senior citizens. The parade was held last Friday at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

NEVER MIND THAT IT WAS RAINING OR that thunder was rumbling in the distance followed by lightning. Despite the bad weather last Friday, the Philippine United Senior Citizens Association (Pusca) pushed through with its annual Flores de Mayo procession at the Quezon Memorial Circle.

Leading the participants was Gilda Quizon, the 78-year-old Reyna Emperatris, who exuded a regal air in her yellow Filipiniana-inspired gown despite the fact that she was on a wheelchair.

She was followed by two Reyna Elenas: Juliet Sanyo, 72, and Imelda Penugo, 55, both portraying Queen Helena, founder of the true Cross and mother of Constantine the Great.

Dressed as the Virgin Mary was Maxima Rizal, 89, the great granddaughter of national hero Jose Rizal, who was in a purple and white Filipiniana gown.

Another elderly woman playing the role of Rosa Mystica threw flower petals over the four women as they went around the circle. They were preceded by eight grandmothers clad in white gowns, each carrying a letter which formed the words, "Ave Maria."

As the participants made their way around the one-kilometer pathway surrounding the mausoleum of President Manuel L. Quezon, there were radiant smiles on their faces, enough to brighten up the gloomy afternoon. They showed no sign of fatigue as they gamely paraded around for spectators.

As the procession wound to a close, the participants' joy in taking part in a Filipino tradition was apparent. For the duration of the Santacruzan, they felt young and pretty once more beneath their wrinkled skin and gray hair. For a brief moment, they were able to relive their youth.

The annual Flores de Mayo procession for senior citizens is a project of Pusca, whose mission and vision is to help the elderly regain their self-esteem and self-worth.

According to the group's national president, Erlinda Garcia, "When people get old, they feel sorry for themselves because their children are no longer with them. It's either their children already have their own families, or even if they still live in the same house, they have no time to talk to their parents because they are tired when they come home from work. As a result, their parents mope in a corner and wallow in self-pity."

EIGHT members of the Philippine United Senior Citizens Association look radiant in their white gowns despite the gloomy weather.

AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

All Pusca projects, Garcia added, are aimed at helping senior citizens relive their youth. "When they were younger, they had to look after their family so they practically had no time for themselves. Now that their children are all grown up, it's about time for them to redeem their lost youth."

"*Kaya makikita mo sila kapag nagsasagala sila, para silang* elated *na nabalik na sa kanila iyong* self-confidence *nila, iyong* self-esteem *nila* (When you see them participating in the procession, they feel happy because they've regained their self-confidence and self-esteem)," Garcia, a doctor, said.

It was Pusca founder Luz Gonzales, former head of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, who came up with the idea of holding a Flores de Mayo parade for senior citizens every year.

Gonzales organized the first procession in 1996, the same year that she formed Pusca.

Garcia has fond memories of Gonzales. "Lola Luz was a former Miss Manila and she was a very beautiful woman with a generous heart. *Nakita niya ang* plight *ng mga* elders (She saw the plight of the elderly) which is why she founded Pusca."

Before Gonzales died in 2005 at the age of 83, she handpicked Garcia to replace her and instructed her son, Oscar Gonzales, to continue her legacy by opening up their home to the elderly for forums where they can reminisce and trade stories.

"The senior citizens are very kind. At first, I was hesitant to lead Pusca because I am from a different field although I was very supportive of Lola Luz. But I found out that the organization is fairly easy to lead. I am proud to be Pusca president. The members love each other and I love them," Garcia said.

PUSCA has 2,000 members nationwide. Its oldest member is 91 years old while the youngest is 50 years old.

Interpol needs Manila cops' help

By Allison W. Lopez

THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL POLICE (Interpol) has asked the Manila Police for help in investigating the death in 2004 of a Filipino woman who lived in Australia.

Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling, Manila Police District homicide chief, yesterday said that Interpol Canberra wanted to find out from the relatives of Virginia Campogan-Frost, 37, if she had a boyfriend when she visited the Philippines in February 2004.

Virginia used to live in Tondo, Manila, before she went to Australia after she married Peter Frost.

After staying in Canberra for 20 years, she went home to the Philippines for a short visit in 2004 before returning to Australia. However, her sister, Evelina, also an Australian resident, reported her missing after she failed to get in touch with her after six months.

According to Evelina, Virginia's husband told her that he had not seen his wife since she left for the Philippines.

Virginia's skeletal remains, however, were found in the backyard of her Australian home in September 2006, two years after she was reported missing. Her husband, who became the primary suspect, was charged with murder after a man he had hired to dig up the grave went to the police.

The Interpol said "initial investigation disclosed that the victim had a boyfriend in the Philippines" which could have led her husband to kill her. Authorities were also looking into reports that Virginia bought an insurance policy before her death, another possible motive for her killing.

METROBRIEFS

Fire hits Pasay church

A TWO-HOUR fire struck the Our Lady of Sorrows church in Pasay City before dawn yesterday, destroying half a million pesos worth of property. No one was reported hurt. The fire of still unknown origin began at the mezzanine of the church at 2130 F.B. Harrison St. at 4:15 a.m. and spread to the rest of the structure, arson investigators said. "The church itself was left intact, but the tables, some of the pews, and electric fans burnt down," said FO3 Mhel Bacultis Jr., one of the firefighters who responded to the blaze. "Fortunately the fire was confined immediately, so it did not spread to the houses," he told the INQUIRER by phone. He said the cause of the fire was still the subject of an investigation. "It was probably caused by faulty wiring," Bacultis said. In his report, Insp. Leo Andiso estimated the damage at P500,000.

DJ Yap

Health reforms, not impeachment

NEWLY proclaimed Pasay City congressman, Jose Antonio Roxas, yesterday said that pushing for the impeachment of President Macapagal-Arroyo would not be part of his legislative agenda during his three-year term. His priority, he added, would be to push for reforms in the health sector, including improving coverage and benefits in government health insurance and protecting patients' rights. "All these I will initiate with the aim of reducing the cost of health care especially for the less privileged without sacrificing the quality of health services and benefits for all," Roxas, a doctor and three-termer councilor, said. "We should not be distracted with a fresh bid for impeachment as there are other urgent policy reforms that need to be pushed," he said. He added that he would push for additional budget allocations to improve the quality of health service in the city's hospitals.

JUNE 14, 2007 * 2:00PM* PENTHOUSE, BA LEPANTO BLDG., 8747 PASEO de ROXAS, MAKATI CITY
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BROKERS ARE WELCOME | SHOW MONEY: P20,000 | FINANCING AVAILABLE
PROPERTIES AT VERY LOW PRICES

LAS PINAS CITY
LOT 1 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 196 sqm.
Floor Area: 131.50 sqm.
No. 115 (Blk 51, Lot 21) BF Carnival Park St., BF Resort Vill. III, Talos II
Minimum Bid Price: 1,541,000
LOT 2 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 210 sqm.
Floor Area: 105 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 1 Ph 2B, Lawn St. Gatchalan Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,038,000
LOT 3 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 351+279 sqm.
Floor Area: 319 sqm.
997 Tropical Avenue corner M. Ponce and P. Roman, BF Executive
Minimum Bid Price: 4,300,000
LOT 4 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 242 sqm.
Pedro Sabido St., Italia 500, BF Resort Vill.
Minimum Bid Price 847,000
MAKATI CITY
LOT 5 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 480 sqm.
Floor Area: 294 sqm.
No. 8912 Sampaloc St. San Antonio Vill.
Minimum Bid Price 9,000,000
Burgundy Corp. Tower
No. 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
LOT 6 CONDO-CMML
Floor Area: 45.25 sqm.
Unit AR-03, 19th Floor
Minimum Bid Price 2,693,000
LOT 7 CONDO-CMML
Floor Area: 60.48 sqm.
Unit D, 20th Floor
Minimum Bid Price 3,599,000
LOT 8 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 83.91 sqm.
Unit 609 6/F Cityland Dela Rosa Condo
No. 7648 Dela Rosa Street
Minimum Bid Price 1,983,000
LOT 9 CONDO-RSDL (w 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 285 sqm.
Unit 2-A Ponte Salcedo Condo. Valero St., Salcedo Village
Minimum Bid Price 9,690,000
Cityland 10 Tower I, H.V. Dela Costa St.
Salcedo Village, Makati City
LOT 10 CONDO-CMML (w/ 2 parking slots)
Floor Area: 73.42 + 12.15 + 12.15 sqm.
Unit 1408, 14th Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 3,392,000
LOT 11 CONDO-CMML (w/ 2 parking slots)
Floor Area: 66.40 + 13.40 + 13.40 sqm.
Unit 2110, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 3,141,000
LOT 12 CONDO-CMML (w/ 2 parking slots)
Floor Area: 65.56 + 13.40 +12.50 sqm.
Unit 2003, 20th Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 3,019,000
LOT 13 CONDO-CMML (w/ 2 parking slots)
Floor Area: 57.98 + 12.50 + 12.50 sqm.
Unit 2117, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 2,759,000
LOT 14 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 54.59 + 12.73 sqm.
Unit 2112, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 2,239,000
LOT 15 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 38.07 + 12.73 sqm.
Unit 2106, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 1,691,000
LOT 16 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 38.07 + 12.65 sqm.
Unit 2114, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 1,718,000
LOT 17 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 29.41 + 12.65 sqm.
Unit 1105, 11th Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 1,343,000
LOT 18 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 29.41 + 13.40 sqm.
Unit 2105, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 1,394,000
LOT 19 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 29.41 + 12.65 sqm.
Unit 2115, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price: 1,394,000
LOT 20 CONDO-CMML (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 29.38 + 12 sqm.
Unit 2101, 21st Floor
Minimum Bid Price 1,383,000
MANDALUYONG CITY
LOT 21 CONDO-RSDL (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 84+13.75 sqm.
Unit 2007-A Wack Wack Twin Tower A
Wack Wack Road
Minimum Bid Price 3,157,000
MANILA
LOT 22 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 235 sqm.
Unit 8F Landseair Mansions, Espiritu cor. Don Pedro St, Singalong
Minimum Bid Price 3,457,000
MARIKINA CITY
LOT 23 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Lot 16 Blk 5, Brazil St. Marikina Greenheights, Concepcion
Minimum Bid Price 713,000
PARAÑAQUE CITY
LOT 24 CONDO-RSDL (w/ 2 parking slots)
Floor Area: 363.94+11.75+11.75 sqm.
Unit 10-C Claveland Tower, Asiaworld City
Minimum Bid Price 8,445,000
LOT 25 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 543 sqm.
119 Homabon St., Brgy. Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price 2,616,000
PASIG CITY
LOT 26 CONDO-RSDL (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 176.20 sqm.
Unit 1102 Manila Luxury Condo, Golden Loop & Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center
Minimum Bid Price: 4,860,000
LOT 27 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 55 sqm.
Floor Area: 84.24 sqm.
Lot 12 Blk 5 Northwood Street Metropolis II Subdivision
Minimum Bid Price: 900,000
LOT 28 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 909 sqm.
Floor Area: 679 sqm.
No. 29 Sampaguita St., Valle Verde II
Minimum Bid Price 23,115,000
QUEZON CITY
LOT 29 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 40 sqm.
Floor Area: 120.98 sqm.
Unit 53 Cluster 6, Cathedral Heights Townhouse, New Manila, Sta. Ignaciana
Minimum Bid Price 2,287,000
LOT 30 CONDO-CMML
Floor Area: 110.80 sqm.
Unit 16-H IBM Plaza, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Avenue, Libis
Minimum Bid Price: 4,654,000
LOT 31 CONDO-RSDL (w/ 1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 77 + 12.50 sqm.
Unit 26D Olympic Heights, Eastwood City, E. Rodriguez Ave., Libis
Minimum Bid Price 4,605,000
LOT 32 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 67.12 sqm.
Floor Area: 132.70 sqm.
25 I Delos Reyes St., Brgy. Milagrosa, Proj. 4
Minimum Bid Price 1,799,000
LOT 33 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,910 sqm.
Floor Area: 1,191 sqm.
Santander Bldg., Aurora Blvd., corner Doña Hemady, New Manila
Minimum Bid Price: 42,750,000
LOT 34 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 59,898 sqm.
Lot 1 Brgy. Bagong Silangan
Minimum Bid Price: 8,386,000
LOT 35 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 300+300 sqm.
#130 Maryland St. Cubao
Minimum Bid Price: 7,020,000
LOT 36 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 749 sqm.
Lot 29 Blk 1 Astor St. North Fairview Subd. P3
Minimum Bid Price: 1,346,000
LOT 37 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 762 sqm.
Lot 35 Blk 6, Emerald St., Tierra Pura Subd. Ph 6, Tandang Sora
Minimum Bid Price 5,715,000
LOT 38 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 489 sqm.
Int. No. 72 4th St. New Manila
Minimum Bid Price 5,135,000
RIZAL
LOT 39 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 24,720 sqm.
Floor Area: 2,283.90 + 614.80 + 1,182.75 + 160.46 + 93.31sqm.
Celestra Business Park, Km. 37, Manila East Road, Bgy. Batingan, Binangonan
Minimum Bid Price 30,000,000
SAN JUAN
LOT 40 CONDO-RSDL (w/1 parking slot)
Floor Area: 90+12.5 sqm.
Unit 303 Mercedes 1 Condo., # 39 Annapolis St., Greenhills
Minimum Bid Price: 3,050,000
BATANGAS
LOT 41 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 165,000 sqm.
Lot 1-C-1, Brgy. Mayuro, Rosario
Minimum Bid Price: 4,611,000
LOT 42 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 160,009 sqm.
Bo. Pinagsibaan, Rosario
Minimum Bid Price: 33,602,000
LOT 43 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 471 sqm.
Lot 31 Blk 9, Betelpalm Street Palmridge Pointe Subd, Talisay
Minimum Bid Price: 924,000
LOT 44 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 481 sqm.
Lot 14 Blk 4. Daemonorops Street Palmridge Pointe Subd, Talisay
Minimum Bid Price: 1,011,000
LOT 45 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 741 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 17, Bluepalm cor. Phoenix Sts, Palmridge Pointe Subd, Talisay
Minimum Bid Price 1,557,000
BULACAN
LOT 46 LOT ONLY
Lot Area. 925 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 27 Desta Homes Subd., Malolos
Minimum Bid Price: 2,267,000
LOT 47 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 2,042 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 1 Road Lot 1 Chicago Street Meycauayan Ind'l Subd., Meycauayan
Minimum Bid Price: 4,136,000
LOT 48 LOT ONLY
Lot Area 5,000 sqm.
Prov'l Rd, Brgy. Gaya-Gaya, SJDM
Minimum Bid Price 13,500,000
CAVITE
LOT 49 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 32,007 sqm.
Lot 1864 Brgy. Zanja Mayor, Tanza
Minimum Bid Price. 6,722,000
LOT 50 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 203 sqm.
Floor Area: 129.57 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 4 United Hills Subd., Bo. Burol, Dasmariñas
Minimum Bid Price 1,213,000
LOT 51 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,376 sqm.
Floor Area: 519 sqm.
Lots 1-7 Indang-Tanza Road, Brgy. Luciano, Trece Martirez
Minimum Bid Price: 5,346,000
LOT 52 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 644 sqm.
Lot 31 Blk 41 Spyglass Hills St., Manila Southwoods Ph 2, Carmona
Minimum Bid Price 2,415,000
CEBU
LOT 53 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,762 sqm.
Floor Area: 1,350 sqm.
Lot 2267-C-3-B-2, Pakna-an Road (Cebu North Road), Mandaue City
Minimum Bid Price: 22,591,000
LOT 54 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,975 sqm.
Lot 5 Blk 2 Paseo Elizabeth, Ma. Luisa Estate Subd., Brgy. Banilad
Minimum Bid Price: 6,360,000
LOT 55 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 8,178 sqm.
Bo. Pasak, Lapu Lapu, Mactan
Minimum Bid Price: 9,800,000
NUEVA ECIJA
LOT 56 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 10,604 sqm.
Lot 1 Brgy. Emeliano, Aliaga
Minimum Bid Price: 796,000
ILO-ILO
LOT 57 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 51,133 sqm.
Lot 1196-C-6 Bo. Tiw. Barotac Nuevo
Minimum Bid Price 15,375,000
LOT 58 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 336+336+336+253 sqm.
Lots 2,3,4 & 5, National Highway, Tabuk Suba, Jaro
Minimum Bid Price: 1,330,000
LOT 59 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 855+806 sqm.
Lots 1540 & 1539, No. 122 Compania St., Molo
Minimum Bid Price 3,769,000
LOT 60 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 10,474 sqm.
Bonza Ave., Brgy. Buhag Tafi North, Mandurriao
Minimum Bid Price 14,250,000
LOT 61 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 3,842 sqm.
Lot 3504-E, Brgy. Baldoza, La Paz
Minimum Bid Price: 2,017,000
LOT 62 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 2,928 sqm.
Lot 3467-E, Brgy. Baldoza, La Paz
Minimum Bid Price: 1,640,000
LAGUNA
LOT 63 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 93 sqm.
Floor Area: 86 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk 3 Villa Consolacion San Vicente, San Pedro
Minimum Bid Price: 478,000
LOT 64 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,034 sqm.
Floor Area: 519 sqm
Lot 542 - B Brgy, Pagsawitan, Sta. Cruz
Minimum Bid Price: 4,705,000
LOT 65 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 112 sqm.
Floor Area: 58 sqm.
No. 6 Paramount St., (Lot 16 Blk 43) Laguna Bel Air, Brgy. Don Jose, Sta. Rosa
Minimum Bid Price: 798,000
LOT 66 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 119 sqm.
Floor Area: 35.24 sqm.
Lot 14 Bk 2 Doña Marcela Subd. Canlalay, Biñan
Minimum Bid Price 459,000
LOT 67 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 61.75 sqm.
Floor Area: 26.5 + 5.5 sqm.
Blk 1 Lot 95 Our Mahogany Vill. II, San Isidro, Cabuyao
Minimum Bid Price 202,000

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Many US employers see flaws in immigration bill

WASHINGTON—EMPLOYERS, A MAJOR force in the national debate over immigration, say their discontent with the bill shaping up in the Senate has deepened over the last week because of changes that could make it more difficult for them to hire foreign workers.

High-tech companies, like Microsoft and Oracle, and employers of lesser-skilled workers, like restaurants and construction contractors, already had qualms about the original version of the legislation, forged in three months of talks between the White House and a dozen senators. But many employers think the bill has become worse in the last week.

E. John Krumholtz, director of federal affairs at Microsoft, said senators were well intentioned and "really wanted to help us" find the skilled professionals needed to design computers and write software.

But Krumholtz said: "The deal is worse than the status quo, and the status quo is a disaster. We are troubled by the grand bargain."

Daryl R. Buffenstein, a former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association whose clients include many Fortune 500 companies, said: "The reforms in the Senate bill do not help the business community. Indeed, they hurt the business community. Under the current system, employers file petitions to show why a particular employee is needed and should get a green card. The Senate bill would eliminate the employers' ability to petition for specific workers."

Companies that employ lower-skilled workers also objected to changes made in the Senate. The original bill would have allowed American companies to bring in 400,000 lower-skilled workers on two-year visas. The number could have increased to 600,000 in response to employers' needs. The Senate lowered the limit to 200,000 and eliminated the automatic adjustment for market conditions.

R. Craig Silvertooth, director of federal affairs at the National Roofing Contractors Association, said: "It eviscerates the temporary-worker program, which was one of the central reasons for the business community to be involved in the immigration debate."

Employers support the provision that would offer legal status to illegal immigrants. With a legal work force, employers say, they could avoid fines and raids by immigration officers. Such raids have disrupted operations at some companies, forcing them to recruit and train replacement workers.

NYT

40 years after, poverty still dogs Australia's Aborigines

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—AUSTRALIA ON Sunday marked 40 years since a historic referendum granted Aborigines citizenship, but celebrations were muted by stark reminders the continent's original inhabitants are still poverty stricken and die much younger than the rest of society.

An overwhelming 91 percent of Australians voted in favor of reforms in the 1967 referendum that gave the federal government the power to make laws covering Aborigines and to count them in the official census for the first time.

Before then, Aborigines' legal rights varied from state to state, with some jurisdictions including them in laws covering wildlife and plants.

Rallies, marches and other ceremonies were held in capital cities on Saturday and Sunday to mark the anniversary—but the focus was on the Aborigines' continuing plight.

A minority of about 400,000 among a population of 21 million, Australia's Aborigines today suffer health and lifestyle problems more common to people living in the Third World than a fully developed nation like Australia.

On average, they die almost 20 years earlier than other Australians and suffer much higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, diabetes and heart disease. Many live in slums in or on the fringes of cities, or in poverty in tiny, remote Outback communities.

Prime Minister John Howard said at a function in Canberra to mark the anniversary that many of the improvements in Aborigines' lives that supporters of the referendum had hoped for have not happened.

Howard's conservative government plans to increase spending on programs for Aborigines to about 3.5 billion Australian dollars ($2.86 billion) a year, but many indigenous leaders accuse him of trampling their hopes for special land rights that could give them an economic share of mining and farming developments.

Howard wants indigenous people to rely less on government handouts and to integrate more in the broader society.

AN ABORIGINE performing the Woggan-magule morning ceremony on Australia Day. AP

"The right of an Aboriginal Australian to live on remote communal land and to speak an indigenous language is no right at all if it is accompanied by grinding poverty, overcrowding, poor health, community violence and isolation from mainstream Australian society," Howard said in a speech.

"There has to be an assumption of responsibility by Aboriginal communities as well as an offer of support from the government and the rest of the community," he said.

Howard is unpopular with many Aborigines, and one guest at Sunday's function yelled out at the end of the leader's speech accusing his government of genocidal policies, to widespread applause.

AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Ukraine's rival political leaders end bitter feud

KIEV—Ukraine's rival political leaders claimed to have ended their bitter feud on Sunday with a deal to hold early elections but analysts said they expected no quick conclusion to their high-stakes game. The political crisis in Ukraine took on menacing overtones last week as President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych tussled for control of security forces. But analysts said both sides knew the political cost of unrest would be too damaging ahead of the polls, which were finally set for September 30 after seven hours of talks between both camps overnight on Saturday. *AFP*

Assad runs uncontested as Syrians vote

ASSAD AFP

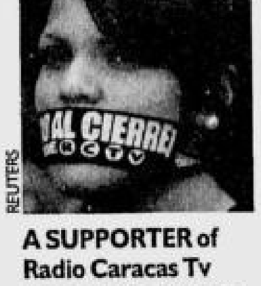
DAMASCUS—Syrians went to the polls on Sunday to reelect President Bashar al-Assad for a second term in a ballot widely viewed as a formality. Only a political miracle could stop Assad, the only candidate allowed to run, from cruising to victory. With Iraq plunging into sectarian strife and instability in Lebanon, state media and the Baath party have emphasized Assad's command of a strong state, economic reform and his vision of upholding Arab rights in the struggle with Israel. "With Bashar, Syria is the homeland of security and stability," the government said in a message to mobile phone subscribers in a million-dollar campaign launched along with businessmen close to the ruling class.Parliament unanimously chose the 41-year-old as the sole candidate for president earlier this month. *Reuters*

4 more genes linked to breast cancer

PARIS—Scientists on Sunday announced they had uncovered four more genes that play a role in breast cancer, widening the portrait of one of the stealthiest slayers of women. Until now, only about 25 percent of the genes that are suspected to cause inherited breast cancer have been identified. The new culprits—flawed versions of genes called FGFR2, TNRC9, MAP3K1 and LSP1—are believed to account for an additional four percent. British-led researchers found them after sifting through the DNA of nearly 50,000 women, half of them healthy and half of them patients with breast cancer. Genetic causes account for between five and 10 percent of breast cancer cases, with "lifestyle factors" such as smoking and environmental factors accounting for the rest. Flawed versions of the four genes are common in the general population, the paper said. *AFP*

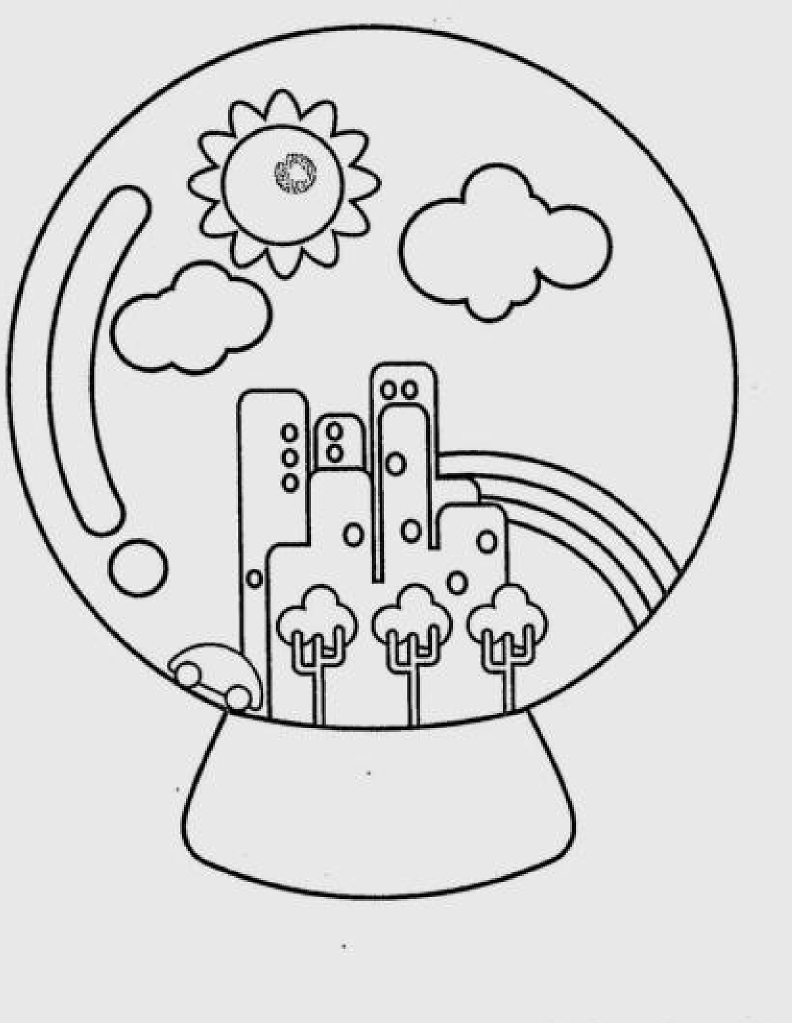
Venezuelans march against closure of TV station

CARACAS—Tens of thousands of Venezuelan protesters marched on Saturday to the Caracas headquarters of an anti-government television station, which is being forced off the air after President Hugo Chavez's administration refused to renew its broadcasting license. Waving flags with the logo of RCTV, demonstrators packed the streets of the capital where news anchors and soap opera stars slammed the imminent closure of the opposition channel. "What is happening here is simply the silencing of a television station," shouted soap opera actress Gledys Ibarra. The government is not renewing RCTV's license after 53 years on the air because of accusations that the broadcaster participated in a bungled 2002 coup against Chavez, incited violent demonstrations and aired immoral programming. Critics condemned the closure for silencing an influential opposition voice and called the move evidence that Chavez's self-styled socialist revolution is concentrating power and muzzling the opposition. *Reuters*



REUTERS

A SUPPORTER of Radio Caracas Tv takes to the streets.



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Israel pushes bombing in Gaza, kills 5

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL BOMBED a series of Hamas facilities in Gaza on Saturday, killing at least five Palestinians and wounding six, and arrested another Palestinian Cabinet minister, Wasfi Kabaha, a member of Hamas, at his home in the occupied West Bank.

Some of the bombings occurred in rapid sequence in daylight; those were on buildings used by the paramilitary Executive Force, a parallel police force dominated by Hamas. The dead, along with most of the wounded, were pulled from a building in the Zeitun district of Gaza City.

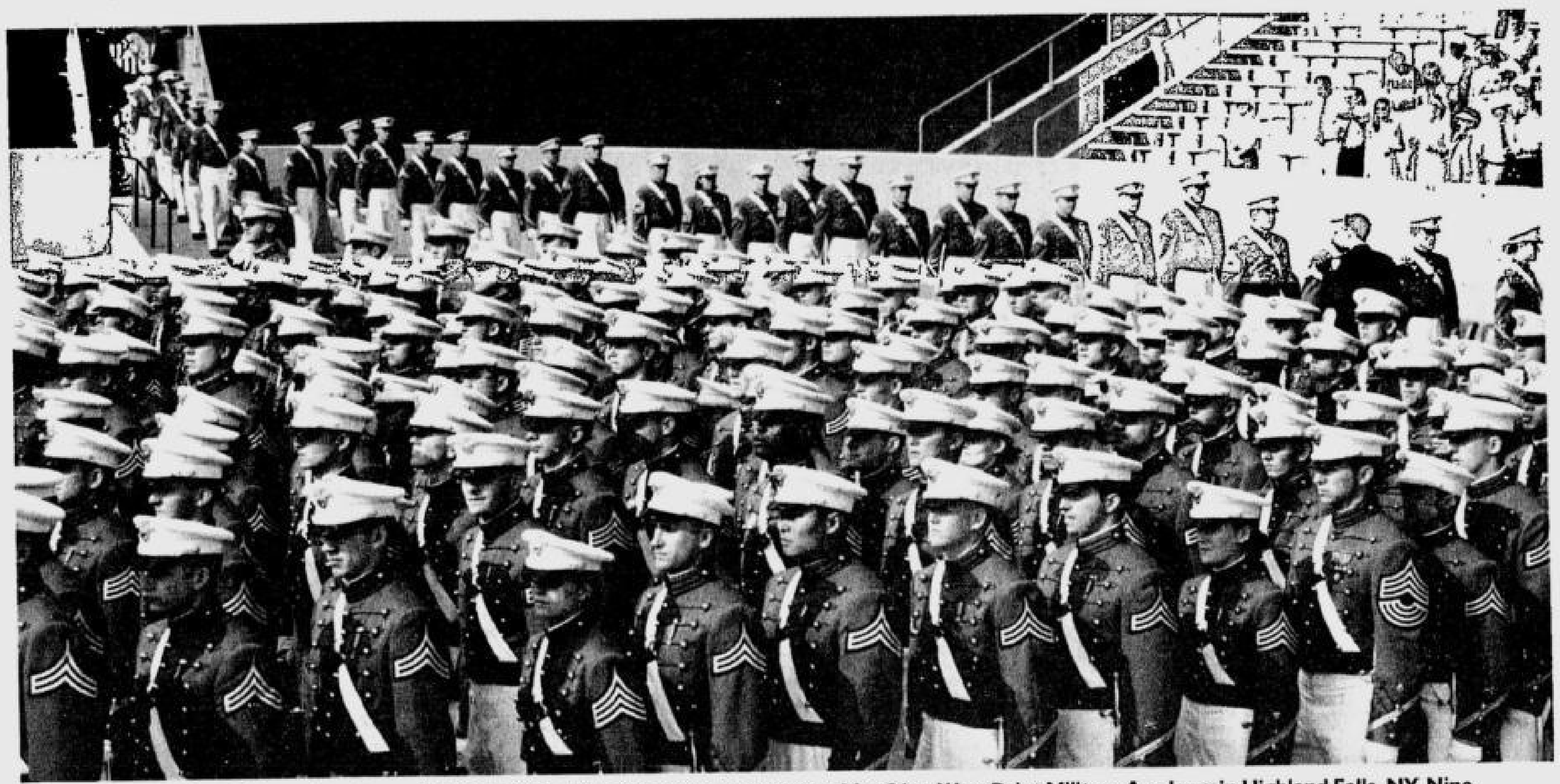
The other daylight strikes were on the Shati refugee camp and the southern city of Rafa, as well as a training camp in Khan Yunis. Hamas has ordered its men to stay out of buildings affiliated with it, and to avoid grouping and the use of cell phones, and most major Hamas leaders are not sleeping at home or using their normal offices, but apparently some were still using the buildings.

Doctors at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza said two of the wounded were in critical condition.

Israel said it launched a total of eight strikes after midnight; in one of them, before dawn, three Hamas militants were killed in an air strike on their car in Gaza City. Hamas television said that the three had launched rockets against Israel.

Israel said the strikes were a response to Hamas' decision to finally break an uneven ceasefire and to launch Qassam rockets against neighboring Israeli farms and towns, like Sderot. Previously, Hamas had largely kept the ceasefire but did nothing to prevent other groups like Islamic Jihad and Fatah's Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades from firing rockets.

Since May 15, the Israeli Army said, more than 225 rockets have been launched toward Israel. Not all landed in Israel, but one Israeli woman has been killed, and two more Israelis seriously wounded by shrapnel. *AP*



GRADUATING West Point cadets stream into Michie Stadium for commencement on May 26 at West Point Military Academy in Highland Falls, NY. Nine hundred seventy eight cadets received their diplomas and will enter the US Army as second lieutenants.

AP

8 more US soldiers killed across Iraq

EIGHT US SERVICEMEN WERE KILLED across Iraq in a series of incidents that have kept May on course to be one of the bloodiest months of the war, the US military reported on Sunday.

The spike in US casualties comes amid a four-month-long surge in troop numbers meant to restore stability to the turbulent capital but which has also exposed US troops to greater losses.

Already over a hundred servicemen have died in May, making for a grim run-up to America's Memorial day at the end of the month when a country increasingly disillusioned by the 4-year-old war commemorates its dead.

Three soldiers were killed when a roadside bomb exploded next to their vehicle in the mainly Sunni Muslim province of Salaheddin on Saturday. Two others were wounded in the blast.

Another explosion on Saturday, this time in southern Baghdad, killed a soldier and wounded two others. Their unit had been searching for weapons caches and detaining insurgent suspects.

In western Anbar province a marine was also killed in combat.

A complex attack involving explosives and small arms fire killed another soldier late Friday north of the capital near Taji. Three others were wounded in the attack.

On Wednesday, another roadside bomb in the predominantly Shiite eastern part of the capital exploded killing two soldiers.

Since Friday at least 17 service members have been reported dying and the latest casualties bring the killed since the March 2003 invasion to 3,453. *AFP*

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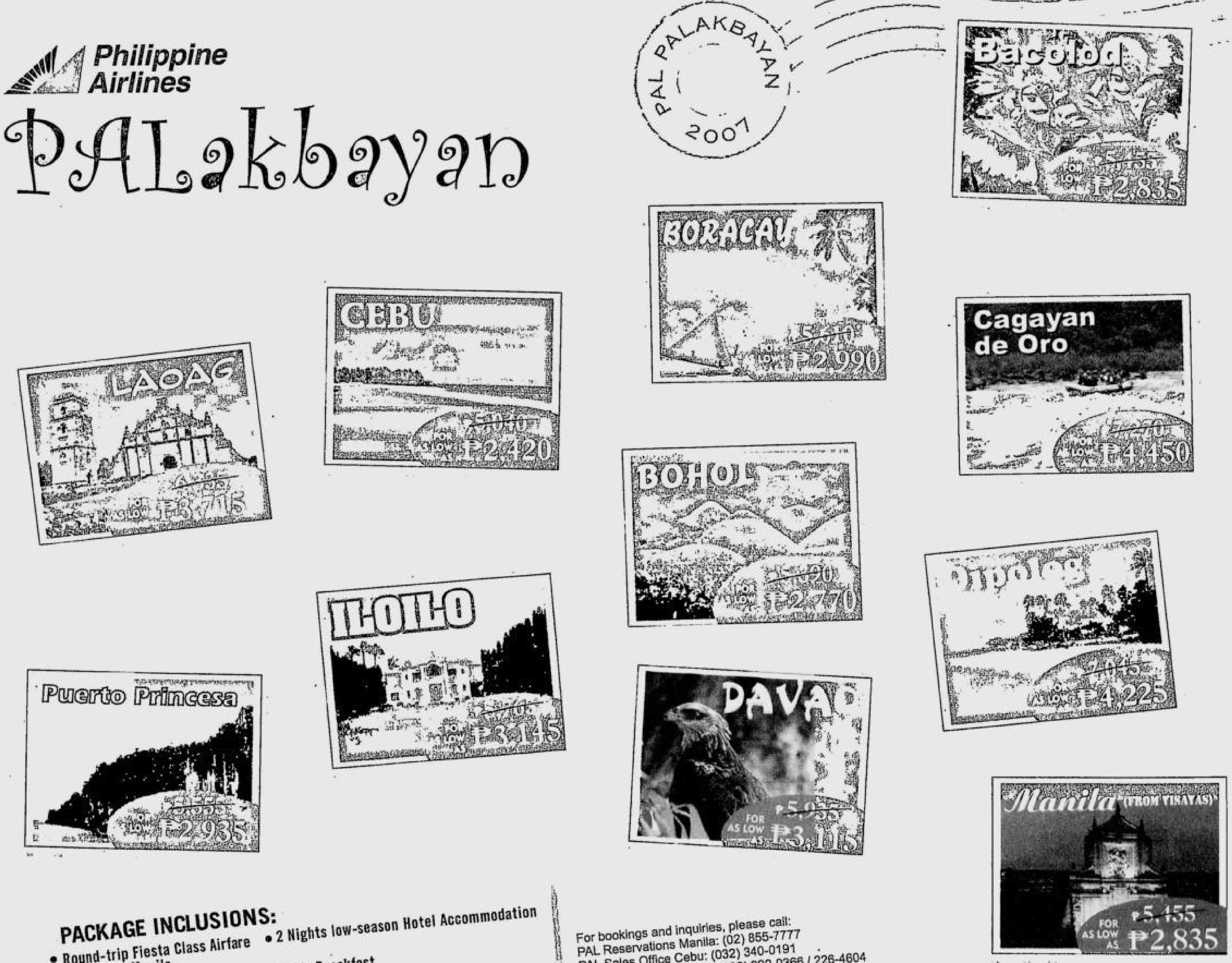

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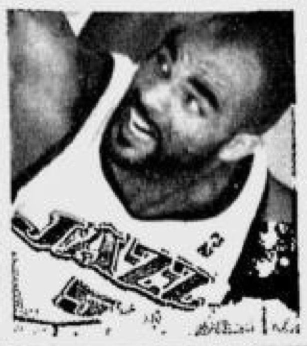

WHAT'S INSIDE

Jazz halt Spurs run /A30

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Intrepid Espiritu a Victor again

By Musong R. Castillo

WITH AN INFLAMED THROAT and an aching body ravaged by the flu, Victor Espiritu was having a hard time cycling over 60 kilometers in practice less than two weeks to the start of the 2007 Tanduay Padyak Pinoy.

He wondered how he would fare in the 1,500-km annual summer spectacle on wheels. But when game time came, the once frail body came through with a performance to remember.

Now 31, the Tour's rookie champion in 1996 put himself in the rare company of two-time winners after skillfully completing the 90 km criterium that made up the final stage yesterday along Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

"Of course, I am happy, especially since I wasn't feeling that well before the Tour," Espiritu, who was cheered on by wife Christine, said in Filipino. "Every rider dreams of winning this event.

"Now I have won it twice, and that makes it more special," added Espiritu, who clocked 1 hour, 52 minutes and 04.94 seconds in the criterium won by Michael John David in 1:49:54.96

The victory was actually the culmination of his much-awaited return to the event after he sat it out the last three years due to differences between the Pagcor-sponsored Trade Team, of which he was a mainstay, and the organizers.

He announced his desire to return to the champions' circle just two stages into the event, wresting the yellow jersey of leadership after the Quezon City-to-Cabanatuan trip two Fridays ago, before dominating the field in the Cordilleras.

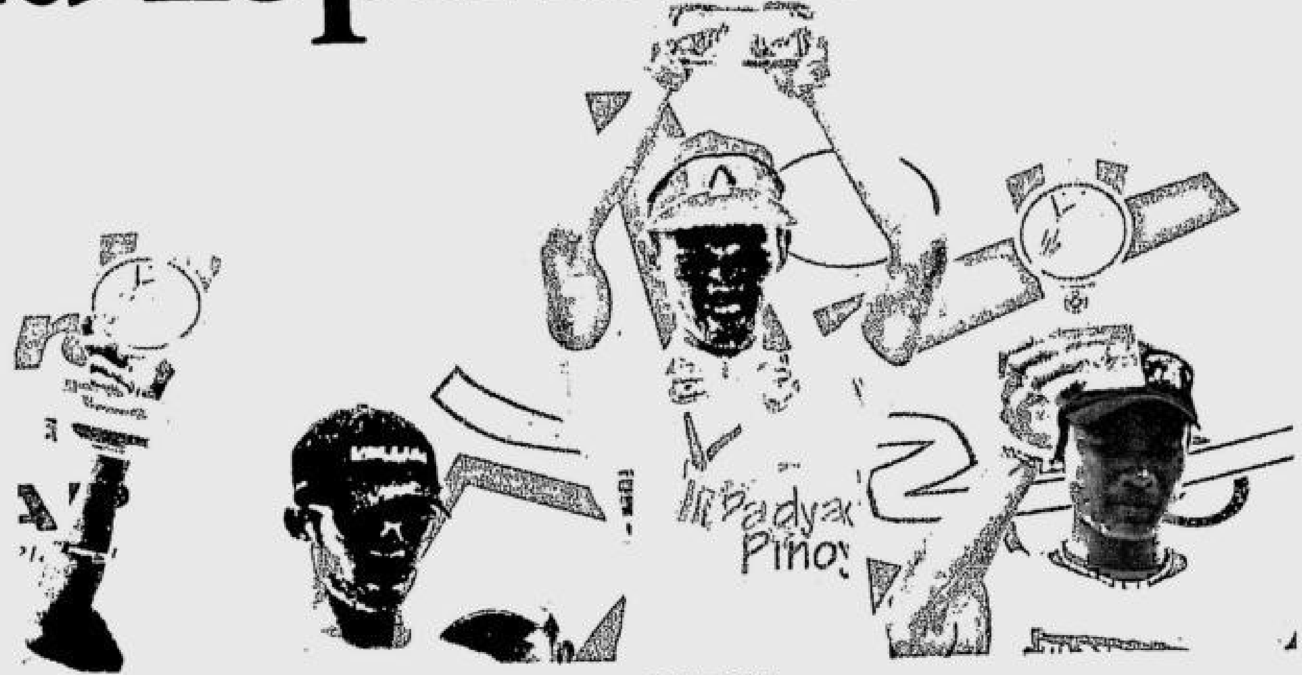
Espiritu—who joined such greats as Cornelio Padilla Jr., Manuel Reynante, the late Jacinto Sicam and Jose Sumalde and modern day heroes Renato Dolosa and Carlo Guieb as two-time winners—also the Cabanatuan-to-Alaminos, Pangasinan, third stage where he defended the yellow jersey with a blistering show of aggressive riding.

After losing the lead briefly, Espiritu reclaimed it in the San Fernando City-to-Baguio seventh stage by finishing fourth behind Lloyd Reynante in the event's first true test of climbing strength.

With a total time of 33 hours, 2 minutes and 38 seconds, Espiritu won over Baler Ravina by 29 seconds and by 1:39 over Irish Valenzuela, last year's top rookie who gave a gutsy performance that will make him a man to watch next year.

The total windfall for Espiritu, counting the P50,000 individual prize, plus about another P50,000 for his share in Wow Magic Sing's team title, would be in the vicinity of P125,000. He also emerged as King of the Mountain.

INTREPID/ A29



BIKATHON champion Espiritu raises his trophy flanked by runner-up Baler Ravina (left) and third placer Irish Valenzuela at the 2007 Padyak Pinoy awards rites at the Rajah Soliman Plaza on Roxas Boulevard.

PDI PHOTO/EDWIN BACASMAS

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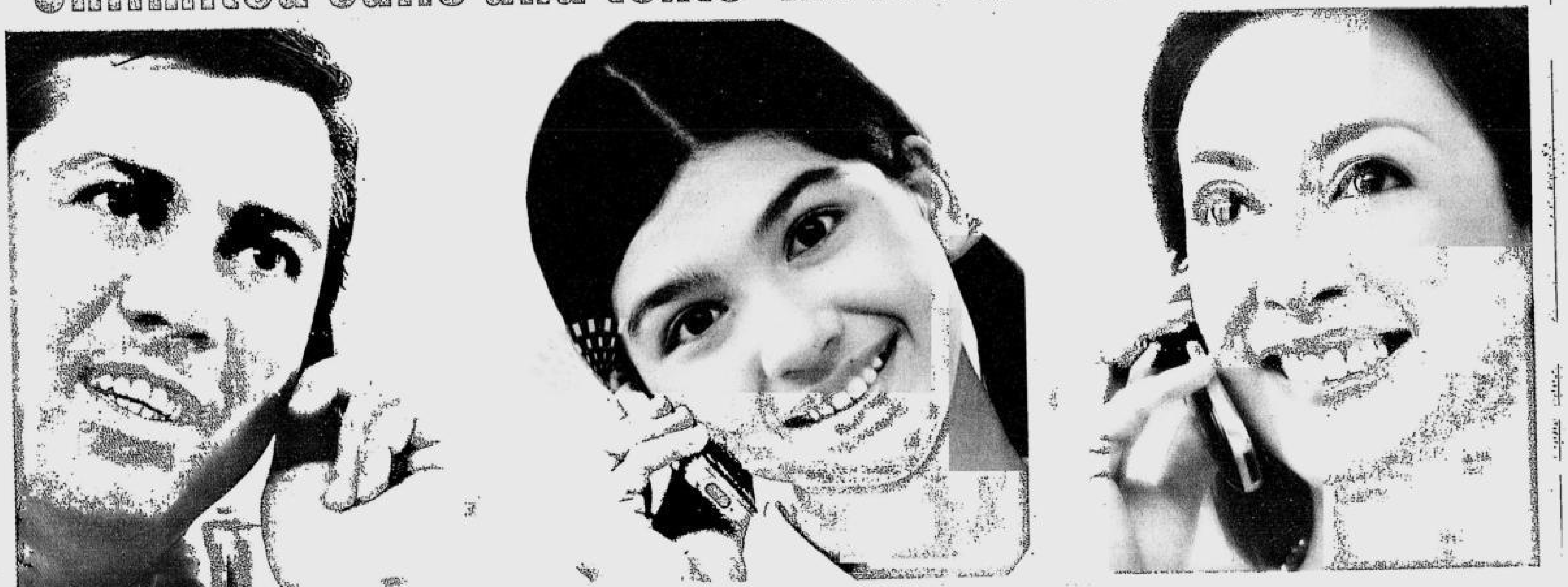

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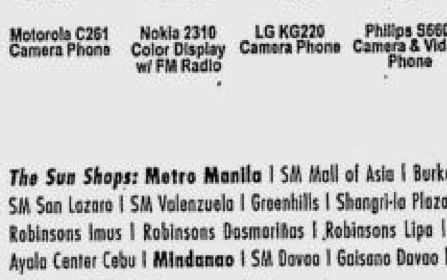

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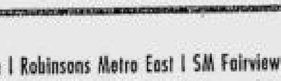

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STANDINGS	W	L
C. Lhuillier	10	2
Harbour	9	3
Henkel Sista	6	6
Toyota Bal.	5	7
Burger King	5	7
Magnolia	4	8
Dazz	3	9

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Balintawak vs Burger King
4 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs San Mig-Magnolia

Beverage Masters eliminate Kitchen Specialists

By Jasmine W. Payo

REFUSING TO TAKE AN EARLY VACATION, San Miguel-Magnolia fended off repeated rallies by Dazz 'Sang Patak to hammer out a 93-84 victory Saturday night and claim the last quarterfinal berth in the PBL Unity Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

Jonas Villanueva typified the Beverage Masters' determined performance by knocking down 11 of his 23 points in the final canto.

Bonbon Custodio added 20 points, eight assists and six rebounds and Jeff Chan contributed 17 in the knockout contest that sent the Kitchen Specialists packing with a 3-9 record.

"Before, I was trying to take away the pressure from the players and say, 'Let's just give our best and everything will turn out right,'" said coach Koy Banal. "But during (Friday's) practice, I told them it's like going to a gun battle. I couldn't say that there was no pressure."

With Dazz moving within four at 80-76 with 4:29 minutes remaining, Chan struck with a jumper and Villanueva came up with triple that stretched the lead to 85-76.

The Beverage Masters closed their elimination run at 4-8, but face a tougher challenge in the quarterfinals where they must beat the third-running Henkel Sista twice to reach the semifinals.

"I just hope that the effort, the kind of mindset and focus they brought in the game, will be there again in the quarterfinals," said Banal.

Toyota Balintawak holds the twice-to-beat edge over Burger King in the other quarterfinal pairing.

Waiting in the wings are early semifinalists Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala and Harbour Centre.

Ken Bono averaged 21 points for the Moneymen in the last two games to bag his second PBL Player of the Week plum.

The scores:

SAN MIGUEL-MAGNOLIA 93—Villanueva 23, Custodio 20, Chan 17, Jones 11, Barcellano 8, Bombeo 4, Rañeses 3, Magpayo 3, Espiritu 2, Doruelo 2, Benitez 0, Evangelista 0.

DAZZ 84—Juntilla 27, Sanz 16, Moreño 11, Rodriguez 11, Mercado 4, Bucao 4, Butel 4, Cenita 3, Hugnatan 3, Larong 1, Almacin 0, Labagala 0.

Quarters: 29-18, 47-36, 65-60, 93-84

Beermen fell reeling Kings

Phone Pals boost semifinal bid

By June Navarro

SAN MIGUEL BEER HAS TURNED ITS DEfense into a sure-fire offensive weapon.

The league's best defensive team clamped down on the offensive-minded Barangay Ginebra Kings and pulled off a 101-98 win last night in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

With their eighth consecutive win, the longest streak so far in the conference, the Beermen improved to 9-7 and boosted their chances of making the quarterfinals outright.

The loss dropped the slumping Gin Kings into a three-way tie for second at 11-6 with the idle Alaska Aces and the surging Talk 'N Text Phone Pals, who clobbered the Sta. Lucia Realtors earlier, 114-102.

The three trail Red Bull whose leading 12-5 card has assured the Bulls at least a playoff for one of two outright semifinal slots.

Rod Nealy was held by the San Miguel defense to 20 points and seven rebounds, a far cry from his regular 32-point and 15.4-rebound output.

He also committed nine turnovers, a couple of them in the pivotal quarter, and missed several attempts when the game was on the line.

Olsen Racela sealed San Miguel's win by going four of four from the charity line in the crunch.

Ronald Tubid buried six three-pointers and finished with a team-high 24 points for the Gin Kings, who found no answer to Dorian Peña's incursions in the paint.

Peña wound up with 22 points while Galen Young was two rebounds shy of a triple double after tallying 12 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds.

Meanwhile, J.J. Sullinger outplayed his counterpart Jamaal Williams, pouring in 24 of his game-high 35 points in the second half as the Phone Pals picked up their fourth win in a row.

Aside from the Beermen, the Air21 Express (9-7) are also still in the running for one of the two automatic semifinal berths.

The scores:

First Game

TALK 'N TEXT 114—Sullinger 35, Cardona 18, Allado 17, Carey 10, Washington 9, Belano 9, Billones 8, De Ocampo 8, Pablo 0.

STA. LUCIA 102—Williams J. 19, Williams K. 17, Espino 17, Omolon 13, Mendoza 10, Aquino 9, Isip 6, Miranda 6, Catli 3, Gonzales 2.

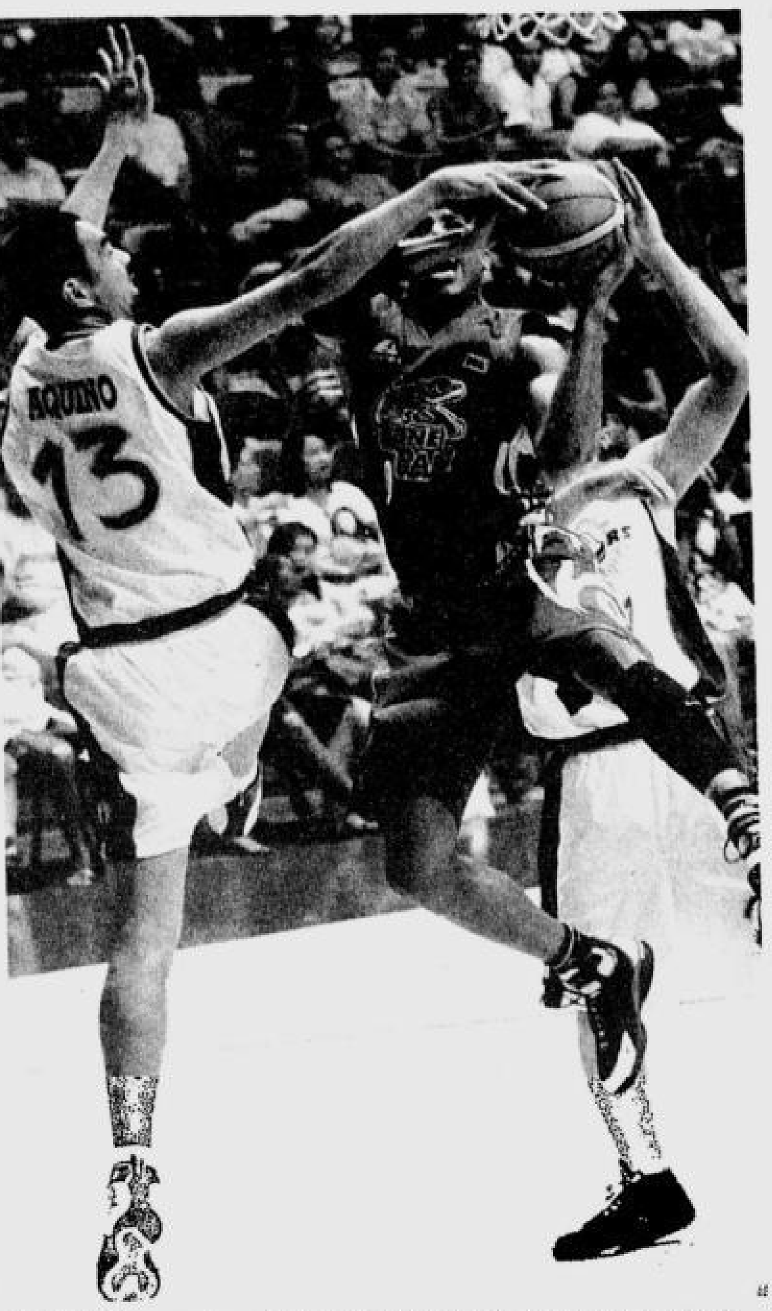
Quarters: 22-21, 48-46, 86-80, 114-102

Second Game

SAN MIGUEL 101—Peña 22, Ildefonso 17, Young 12, Calaguio 12, Racela 10, Cablay 9, Tenorio 8, Adducul 6, Gonzales 3, Wilson 2.

GINEBRA 98—Tubid 24, Nealy 21, Abarrientos 18, Menk 8, Santos 8, Seigle 7, Salvacion 6, Mamaril 4, Chia 2, Macapagal 0.

Quarters: 25-23, 47-44, 75-71, 101-98



THERE'S no way to go for Talk 'N Text's J.J. Sullinger whose drive is smothered by SLR's Marlou Aquino (left) and Norman Gonzales during last night's game.
INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Pacman five snaps Iligan victory run

ILIGAN CITY—Aware that their boss Manny Pacquiao is hurting after a stinging loss in the political arena, the GenSan MP Pacman cagers gave the champ some consolation by ending the six-game winning streak of erstwhile unbeaten Iligan, 83-73, Saturday in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the MSU-IIT gym here.

STANDINGS	W	L
Iligan	6	1
Tagaytay	5	1
Pagadian	6	4
Valencia	5	4
Ozarniz	3	2
Quezon	4	5
GenSan	3	4
Davao	2	7
Iloilo	1	9

A barrage of three-pointers froth Donald Tadena and Louie Medalla in the first quarter set the tone for Pacman's stunning victory.

Mayor Lawence Cruz's Crusaders, also backed by Sen. Ralph Recto, rallied behind Bong Marata but they could not sustain their run.

It was Pacman's third win in seven games.

The Crusaders remained on top at 6-1.

"It feels great to win again," said GenSan coach Ramon Pido. "*Nasunod ang* game plan *namin. Naunahan namin sila* and I think that was the key."

Meanwhile, the NBC game of the week is aired at 6:30 p.m. every Friday on BasketballTV.

The scores:

GENSAN 83—Medalla 15, Coronado 11, Dennison 11, Celiz 10, Mejorada 9, Farochilien 8, Recustodio 7, Tadena 6, Loesin 6, Ramos 4.

ILIGAN 73— Marata 21, Mangahas 13, Guiyab 8, Kalaw 7, Sta. Cruz 7, Cabili 4, Magdadaro 30, Hardin 2, Gatchalian 2, Ayodelle 2.

Quarters: 26-16, 44-37, 58-50, 83-73

Can the RP national team find its true name?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW the Philippine national basketball team play?

In the 1972 Munich Summer Games, where the RP national squad had its last Olympic outing?

Or in the 1974 World Basketball Championship in Puerto Rico, which marked the last time a Philippine national basketball contingent fought in a full-scale international cage war.

There were glowing ringside reports about an RP national squad, pillared by half-Filipinos, on its sweet way to sweeping the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) men's basketball championship in a rustic suburb of Thailand.

Before the Thai countryside picnic, there was this man-sized Asian club tournament in Tehran where our national squad competed to mark the Philippines' return to the international field following the lifting of a ban imposed by the international basketball federation (Fiba) on the country.

* * *

Sorry to say this but, in both occasions—the Tehran test and the Seaba bash—there was no clear sign the Philippines was represented by a squad that could be called truly national.

No, not solely because it was not pure Pinoy blood that fueled the national squad, whose roster had been left open to half-Filipinos.

For one, it's still hard to define the likes of Mick Pennissi, who could've descended from a Roman centurion, and Asi Taulava, of colorful Tongan hairdo and roots, as distinctly Pinoy.

However, it was not in proper national appearance and looks alone that the RP national cage squad was found lacking.

* * *

There was clearly a short supply of the fabled Filipino character—shaped up by courage and determination through the years—with inborn qualities that had sent the Philippine flag soaring proudly in various international fields.

The RP team currently campaigning in Thailand is indeed the Philippine national team.

It cannot be called any other thing.

But one thing that will continue to separate it from national squads during the times of Loyzaga, Mumar, Badion, Reynoso, Melencio, Bernardo and, yes, Jaworski, was the absence of fear among these basketball idols.

Looking back in comparison, it's easy to say that, while those great Pinoy cagers would go out to do battle, the current breed of national players go abroad mainly to compete and play, nothing more.

* * *

Loyzaga, Mumar, Badion et al were devoted basketball warriors; our current national cagers, the way they had allowed themselves to be pushed around in the all-revealing Tehran test, were basically ball players.

Who knows? There could be a few in the current RP squad who are candidates to be future Badions or Mumars?

But it's either their toughness and grit were being shaken by the soft, borrowed pillars in the national squad or they had been rendered gutless by the style of local officiating in the PBA.

The realization would come late, but PBA officials would themselves admit that our pro referees were partly to blame for the lost, undecided stand by the RP squad in the Tehran cage battles.

The way they call it in the PBA, there was the great tendency to de-emphasize on tough defense.

Naturally, this would result in double jeopardy, as sweet officiating also shaped up so-so offensive fighters.

* * *

Nobody would openly admit the fault, but at least, there's now this frantic rush to set the house in order.

They wanted to turn bellyachers into pure warriors overnight.

Sad to say, we're all faced with a tough, if not impossible task.

Coach Chot Reyes may have the right formula: field players with both talent and deep heroic character.

The call of the day is to bring back the courage and nationalism that had fueled our Philippine squads of the past, from the PI team debut in the 1936 Berlin Olympics all the way down to the RP team's Olympic farewell in Munich.

Coach Chot Reyes has the winning concoction, but will he be able to dig for the proper components?

Can the national coaching staff squeeze out great, fearless basketball from a mongrel national team?

Django, Orcollo sustain streak in winners' row

FORMER WORLD NO.1 FRANCISco "Django" Bustamante and reigning World Pool Leaque champion Dennis Orcollo hurdled their respective rivals to remain undefeated in the ongoing Predator World 10-Ball Championships at the Bankshot Billiard Hall in Jacksonville, Florida.

The 44-year-old Bustamante downed US-based Pinoy Al Lapeña, 10-6, in the winners' side 2 while Orcollo, 28, crushed American Mike Davis, 10-4, in Winner's Side 1.

Bustamante will face five-time world champion. Johnny Archer in the next round.

Archer, 49, whipped Filipino Marlon Manalo, 10-6.

Orcollo, who topped the 2007 Enjoypool.com last week in Las Vegas, will next clash with Manuel Gama of Portugal, who beat Keisuke Hanawa of Japan, 10-2.

National Open champion Lee Van Corteza and 2004 World Pool 9-ball king Alex Pagulayan also fell into the losers' bracket.

Corteza bowed to Raj Hundal of the United Kingdom, 10-8, in Winner's Side 1, while Pagulayan bowed to American Danny Harriman, 10-7, in the Winners' Side 2.

Hundal moves up against European champion Niels Feijen of the Netherlands while Harriman will test the mettle of Ralf Souquet of Germany, another former world 9-ball champion, who beat Naoyuki Oi of Japan, 10-8.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Heart patient outkicks field, captures 10K race

By Jasmine W. Payo

EVEN A HEART CONDITION WILL NOT stop Rogelio Adenig from running.

Looking lean and fit at 44, Adenig ruled the Masters Executive and Corporate 10K run yesterday at the Narra Park in Ayala Alabang.

Adenig, an Army master sergeant who is afflicted with ischemia, broke away from the rest of the 90-strong field in the 4 km mark to win the masters race in 38 minutes and 31 seconds.

"Sometimes I find it difficult to breathe," Adenig said in Filipino.

Joseph Rosete finished second in 39:28, while 50-year-old Edgardo Pedregosa wound up third in 39:53.

Daisy Castillon, 42, a variety store owner, led all the way to top the women's masters division in 51:55 minutes.

Rizzo Tangan came in second in 53:41 followed by Doray Ellis in 53:56.

Ellis, sales director of GMA 7, also ruled the women's executive division followed by Ruby Ann Allas (1:0:920) and Chay Saputil (1:13:36).

Graciano Santos topped the men's race in 45:58, followed by Danilo Bundeo in 45:59 and Mark Ellis in 46:50.

PERFECT GAMERS

JOSE "Peping" Chan (left) and Lito Santarinala, both members of the Sta. Lucia East Tenpin Bowling Association (Sletba), strike a pose after scoring perfect games recently. Chan rolled his first 300 game on the way to a runner-up finish in Sletba's 18-game marathon No-Tap Tournament using a 14-pound Brunswick Absolute Inferno. Santarinala rolled his nth 300 during the venue's May monthly mixed Class A finals using a 16 lb Special Agent by Storm.

Tamaraws oust Tigers, advance with Red Lions

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY POUNDED UNIversity of Santo Tomas, 84-57, and barged into the quarterfinals of the Filoil-Flying V Pre-Season Invitational Cup yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

Outscoring the UST Tigers in the second half, 51-33, the Tamaraws easily qualified in Group A at 3-3 while towing along San Beda behind leaders Jose Rizal University and University of the East.

With just one playing day left, San Beda's 3-2 slate is already beyond reach of the University of the Philippines (1-4). Perpetual (2-4) and Ateneo (1-5) are out of it all.

UST bowed out of the Group B quarterfinal race with a 1-5 slate. Even if they win over JRU on June 1, Letran (3-4), Philippine Christian University (2-4) and Mapua (3-4) are assured of a higher finish than the Tigers.

La Salle posted a similar lopsided win over Perpetual Help in the second game, 71-55, to retain the Group B lead at 5-1 and oust the latter from the next round.

UE equalled JRU's 5-0 card in Group A after beating Mapua, 71-55, in the nightcap.

The quotient system will determine the fourth quarterfinalist in Group B in case of a triple tie at 3-4 among Mapua, Letran and PCU.

Marnel Baracael and Alfredo Gerilla topscored for the Tams with 17 points apiece.

Romina Austria

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK: Four of the country's future sporting stars (from left) karting champion Javi Benitez (foreground), cage standout Anton Asistio, figure skating champion Katrice delos Reyes and tennis ace Chynna Mamawal are hosting the new sports TV show "Sports Kids," aired on Studio 23 every Saturday. Sports Kids features segments on sports heroes, the coaches and other people behind their success, and how they train to become champions.

Cebu clouters blank Makati

Orillana pitches 2-hitter

PHILIPPINE TEAM ACE PITCHER JOSEPH ORILLANA HURLED a two-hitter as Cebu blanked Makati, 8-0, in the inaugural game of the Baseball Philippines pilot series yesterday at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

The southpaw Orillana, a veteran of the Asian Baseball Federation tournament, went the full route and struck out six batters for Cebu, bannered by 10 players from La Salle.

The Dolphins backed Orillana with a 10-hit attack off Jon Jon Robles and Roel Batuto, capping the onslaught with three runs in the ninth inning.

Makati, represented by the University of Santo Tomas Gold Sox, doomed its cause with six errors.

The Harbour Center-sponsored Manila Sharks clobbered the Laguna Tigers, 8-3, in the second game.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco made the ceremonial pitch to unveil the staging of the event presented by Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdogs and sponsored by Gatorade, Harbour Centre, Industrial Enterprises, Inc. and Teleperformance Inc.

He was assisted by Paba president Hector Navasero, Philippine Sports Commission assistant executive director Cesar Pradas, Moying Martelino and Chito Loyzaga and other officials of the organizing Community Sports Inc. (CSI).

The world-renowned Madrigal Singers sang the national anthem before an appreciative crowd to usher in the tourney.

CRIS Jimenez of Laguna slides safely to second base in the third inning of the game between Laguna and Manila. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Back-to-back hits by Alden Lozada and Neil Suelto spoiled Orillana's bid for a no-hitter but the Cebu ace preserved the shutout by retiring Jerby Diego, Edelmar Servo and Jake Cumlat.

"Good start," said Cebu coach Isaac Bacarisas. "Hopefully, they can sustain their game as the tournament progresses."

The tournament hopes to revive interest in the sport while giving the national players, who were spread out among the five teams, a chance to prepare for their defense of the Southeast Asian Games title in Thailand this December.

It was actually Orillana who broke the ice for the Dolphins, driving in one of two Cebu runs in the second inning. The Dolphins added two more runs in the fifth off Robles through Jerome Bacarisas and Fulgencio Rances, who scored on Darwin de la Calzada's sacrifice fly to center.

Robles gave way to Batuto but the right-handed hurler from Davao couldn't stop the Dolphins, who picked up another run in the eighth and three more in the ninth.

Tho linescores:

First Game		R H E
CEBU	020 020 013	8 10 2
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Pacquiao, Soto cross paths Wednesday

WBC NO. 2 HUMBERTO SOTO AND WBC NO. 6 Bobby Pacquiao of the Philippines will cross paths for the first time when they face the media on Wednesday (Thursday in Manila) to promote their June 9 battle at the Madison Square Garden in New York.

According to Ricardo Jimenez, public relations officer of Top Rank, undefeated young prospect Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. will join Pacquiao and Soto in the press conference.

The young Chavez will attempt to avenge the defeat suffered by his father, the legendary Julio Cesar, to Grover Wiley in a 10-round bout.

The winner of the 10-round Soto-Pacquiao clash will most likely earn the right to face WBC super-featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez next.

Soto (41-5-2, 25 KOs), from Tijuana, Mexico, is looking for a win over the younger Pacquiao as his ticket to big-money showdowns possibly against Marquez or Manny Pacquiao.

Bobby Pacquiao trains at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood under renowned trainer Freddie Roach. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

[illegible]

FINAL TEAM STANDINGS
1. Wow Magic Sing 127:18:49.851
2. Cossack Vodka 127:20:13.558
3. Cool Pap 127:21:23.147
4. Caltex 127:23:35.190
5. Vellum 127:41:33.314
6. Champion 127:45:23.567
7. Air21 128:16:37.728
8. Bacchus 128:24:41.389
9. Mall & More 128:24:47.913
10. U-Freight 128:27:26.031
11. Cargohaus 129:01:38.490
12. Vis-Min Team 131:31:04.568

STAGE INDIVIDUAL
1. M. David Vellum 1:49:54.96
2. O. Rendole Cool Pap 1:49:54.96
3. J. Bautista Champion 1:49:54.96
4. O. Villanueva Champion 1:50:27.90
5. S. Diamsay Cargohaus 1:50:27.90
6. J. Barantes Mall & More 1:50:27.90
7. M. Aleonar Vellum 1:51:04.95
8. R. Clauna Caltex 1:51:04.95
9. R. Acosta Vellum 1:51:04.95
10. B. Lopez Jr. Air21 1:51:04 95

FINAL OVERALL STANDINGS
1. V. Espiritu Wow Magic Sing 33:02:38
2. B. Ravina Cool Pap 33:03:08
3. I. Valenzuela Cossack Vodka 33:04:18
4. S. Barnachea Champion 33.05:24
5. L. Reynante Air21 33:06:38
6. M. Ramos U-Freight 33:07:21
7. R. Sambrano Cossack Vodka 33:08:00
8. J. Calderon Caltex 33:10:52
9. E. Obosa Bacchus 33:21:25
10. H. Sicam Wow Magic Sing 33:23:19
11. D. Hardin Caltex 33:24:21
12. A. Quirimit Mall & More 33:26:18
13. C. Nadyahan Caltex 33:27:32
14. A. Benosa U-Freight 33:29:06
15. H. Mangahis Cool Pap 33:32:45
16. M. Aleonar Vellum 33:33:23
17. J. Ricafort Wow Magic Sing 33:36:03
18. O. Rendole Cool Pap 33:36:50
19. A. Calpito Bacchus 33:37:41
20. M. Reyes Cossack Vodka 33:38:25
21. M. David Vellum 33:38:39
22. J. Tolentino Caltex 33:39:02
23 R. Martin Vellum 33:39:34
24. B. Luzon Cool Pap 33:42:51
25. J. Barantes Mall & More 33:43:39
26. B. Lopez Jr. Air21 33:46:10
27. N. Guanzon U-Freight 33:49:52
28. J. Guevarra Bacchus 33:51:48
29. E. Domingo Champion 33:59:41
30. D. Cagas Bacchus 34:00:49
31. R. Pagala Air21 34:04:09
32. J. Bautista Champion 34:04:15
33. O. Villanueva Champion 34:14:51
34. R. Villaver Vis-Min Team 34:16:31
35. Z. Mateo U-Freight 34h:26:18
36. R. Clauna Caltex 34:27:46
37. A. Ricafort Wow Magic Sing 34:30:20
38. L. Lingas Jr. Cargohaus 34:30:40
39. A. Asuncion Cargohaus 34:33:43
40. R. Acosta Vellum 34:33:52
41. S. Diamsay Cargohaus 34;36:48
42. J. Garcia Mall & More 34:42:03
43. M. Tucay Cool Pap 34:51:12
44. R. Carbonera Vis-Min Team 34:51:38
45. L. Dimaano Cossack Vodka 34:52:01
46. N. Barbalose Vis-Min Team 34:52:33
47. S. Abaga Caltex 34:52:54
48. N. Ramos Bacchus 34:58:14
49. R. Torres Cossack Vodka 35:04:00
50. P. Calosa Champion 35:09:54
51. N. Jasul Cossack Vodka 35:11:28

Intrepid Espiritu a Victor again

From page A27

But that prize will have to wait, as organizers yesterday announced that all prize money will be frozen until they have concluded their investigation into the incident that marred the ninth stage.

Several riders, including the big guns, wanted to chop down the route by some 10 kilometers in La Union by refusing to pedal straight to Agoo town and instead make their way to Rosario.

Sources said Reynante, Bernard Luzon and Merculio Ramos were the instigators of the "protest" action. A total of 24 km was declared "null and void" and a restart was ordered.

Penalties like suspension of licenses from the Games and Amusements Board and from the Philippine Cycling Association seemed in order. If the guilty are members of the national team, they will automatically be dropped from the roster.

A 23-year-old from Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, Carlos Nadyahan was named Rookie of the Year after finishing 13th overall, close to 25 minutes behind Espiritu's Tour-winning pace. He also won P20,000 like Luzon, who won the Sprint title.

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SPORTS

Verplank, 5 others share Colonial lead

FORT WORTH—SCOTT VERPLANK HAD FIVE BIRDIES IN 13 HOLES Saturday before the third round of the soaked Crowne Plaza Invitational at Colonial was suspended by impending darkness and more rain. He got to 9-under for a share of the lead with Rory Sabbatini, Pat Perez, Kevin Na, Arron Oberholser and Ben Curtis. Tim Clark was at 8-under. *AP*

England recalls US-bound Beckham

LONDON—DAVID BECKHAM INSISTS HIS IMMINENT MOVE TO AMERICA will not be a stumbling block to his ambitions of extending his England career following his surprise recall. He is back in the England squad for the first time since last year's World Cup after Steve McClaren opted to swallow his pride and pick the Real midfielder for Friday's friendly against Brazil. *AFP*

BELGIUM'S Justine Henin seeks her third straight French Open title.

At 25, Henin feels old but still competitive

PARIS—JUSTINE HENIN WILL CELEBRATE her 25th birthday during this year's French Open, and the three-time champion is already concerned that she is getting too old.

"It's very young in my life, but when you see these young players going at 15, 16 years old that push us a lot, it's not easy," said Henin, who won the French Open last year and reached the final at the other three majors. "My body doesn't recover as well as it did five years ago."

The top-ranked Belgian will begin her quest for a fourth title at Roland Garros on Sunday when she faces Elena Vesnina of Russia in the first round.

"A Grand Slam is hard (to win), and especially on clay," Henin added. "Physically and mentally you have to be really strong."

Serena and Venus Williams will also be in action on the first day of the French Open, while Marat Safin, Juan Carlos Ferrero and Fernando Gonzalez play matches in the men's draw.

The French Open will be Henin's first Grand Slam tournament of the year. She pulled out of the Australian Open for personal reasons, and soon after announced she was separating from her husband of five years, Pierre-Yves Hardenne.

"It's been hard for me not to play in Australia, but many other things in my life were much more important at the time," Henin said. "But now I just feel ready to be in this kind of situation again."

With another French Open victory this year, Henin will become the first woman to win three consecutive titles at Roland Garros since Monica Seles in 1990-92.

"Everyone knows it's my favorite tournament," said Henin, who is 7-1 on clay this season. "I feel good at the moment and I have great pleasure playing here."

Meanwhile, top-ranked Roger Federer beat the man he defeated in the Australian Open final, Fernando Gonzalez, in a one-set exhibition, 7-6 (1), on Saturday in front of a packed center court crowd at Roland Garros. *AP*

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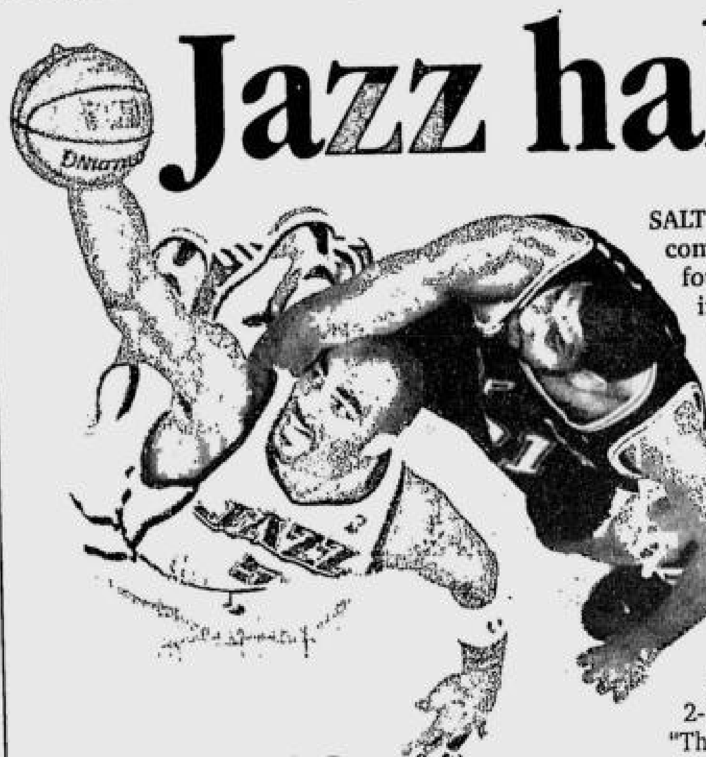
Jazz halt Spurs run



UTAH Jazz forward Carlos Boozer (left) hauls down a rebound as San Antonio Spurs' Tim Duncan looks on during Game 3 of the Western Conference finals. REUTERS

SALT LAKE CITY—BACK IN THE comfort of home, the Utah Jazz found what they were lacking in the first two games of the Western Conference finals: Confidence, defense and scorers other than Carlos Boozer and Deron Williams.

Williams and Boozer still led the way, but it was the play of their teammates that carried Utah past San Antonio, 109-83, on Saturday night, and cut the Spurs lead in the series, 2-1.

"This does a world of good for our confidence," said Williams, who had 31 points and eight assists.

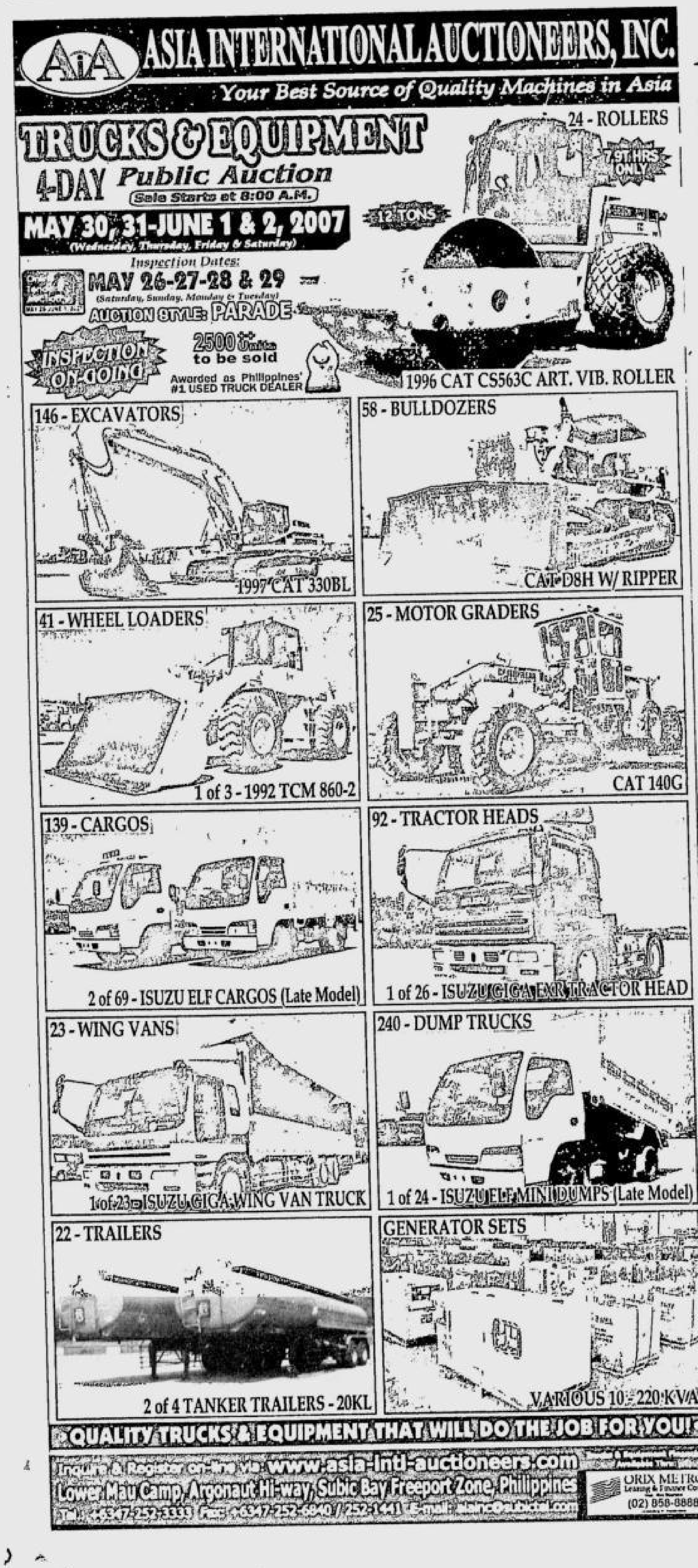
Boozer had 27 points and 12 rebounds and Utah's supporting cast came to life during a game-changing 12-3 spurt in the second quarter, keeping the Jazz perfect at home this postseason, 7-0, and making them 3-0 against the Spurs in Salt Lake City this season.

San Antonio's Tim Duncan got in foul trouble early and never recovered. Although he didn't foul out, he played tentatively and wound up with 16 points and eight rebounds. He also had eight turnovers as his run of 20-point, 10-rebound games ended at 11.

"It's tough to get going and to stay aggressive when you have fouls like that," Duncan said. "They just played a better game than us for a long time. They were aggressive, they were physical, their guys shot well."

Utah's win means there will be no sweep, and this may yet turn into a competitive series after two lopsided games in San Antonio. *AP*

NBA ON TV Today
Eastern Conference Game 3
8:30 a.m.—Detroit vs. Cleveland



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Alonso back in pole position

MONACO—FERNANDO ALONSO WILL start Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix from pole position with British teammate and Formula One championship leader Lewis Hamilton alongside on an all-McLaren front row.

FERNANDO Alonso REUTERS

Brazilian Felipe Massa had to settle for third place for Ferrari with his run of three poles in a row ended by the Spanish double world champion who won the showcase race for Renault last year.

Ferrari had been on pole for the past six races but Alonso, with the 16th pole of his career and second in a row in Monaco, gave McLaren their first since Kimi Raikkonen at Monza in Italy last September.

Threatened rain held off after morning showers in a tense session that left the McLaren drivers, divided by two points at the top, well placed for their second one-two of the season.

"I think this year is a little more special regarding the weather conditions, that are not 100 percent sure either wet or dry," said Alonso. "I think it could be a very difficult race and a little bit like a lottery for everybody.

"The race is so long that even pole position means nothing, probably," he added.

Hamilton, just 22 years old and chasing his fifth podium finish in five races after beco-ming the youngest championship leader, was quickest until Alonso went faster with only seconds remaining.

"I think if you look at it, we're the quicker ones this weekend," said Hamilton, who might have taken pole for the most glamorous race of the season had he not been held up by Australian Mark Webber's Red Bull. "We've got a great car, the best car...so I have absolutely no worries going into the race."

Raikkonen, now with Ferrari, will start 16th after striking the metal barrier at the harbourside Swimming Pool chicane and breaking the steering. The Finn is fourth in the championship, eight adrift of Hamilton and five behind Massa. *Reuters*

World champs open bid in Makati 8-cocker today

FOURTEEN FORMER WORLD SLASHers Cup champions head a star-studded field seeing action starting at 4 p.m. today in the Makati Invitational 8-Cock Super Derby at the Makati Coliseum.

More than 100 fights are scheduled in the derby backed by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador which dangles a guaranteed prize of P3 million.

The roster of participants includes ex-world champs former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares, William Co, Richard Bates, Gengen Arayata, Boy Marzo, Willie Villarica and Nene Abello, Jun Santiago, Lito Orillaza and Rudy Salud, Boy de Roca, William Go and Jorge "Nene" Araneta.

Expected to challenge them for supremacy are some of the fastest-rising derby titlists that includes boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, who will field his favorite Super Pacman I and II entries.

Pacquiao, winner of the 2006 NCA International Derby and the Davao 6-Cock Derby recently, will rely on the imported Joe Sanford fowls which he himself trained and conditioned in his gamefarm in General Santos City.

Prominent Alabama breeder Richard Kelly will also see action along with Efren Canlas, former senator Ramon Revilla, the Madlambayan brothers, the Milky Wings group, Jun Pascual, Rodolfo Pineda of San Juan Coliseum, Fil-Ams Aster Lopez, Joe Cuyugan and Zaldy Sandoval of California, Ricky Valencia, Osang dela Cruz, Eddie Ison, Bobby Doromal, Louie Cua, Danny Soriano, Emil Chua, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano.

Today's battle will feature the 2-cock elimination round. The 2-cock semifinals is on Wednesday and the 4-cock finals on Friday.

RP ultimate tourney starts

THE PHILIPPINE ULTIMATE ASSOCIATION (PUA) brought together the country's top Ultimate clubs for the first-ever Pocari Sweat Ultimate Club Championships.

The league, in partnership with Pocari Sweat, kicked off last May 20 at the West Field of the Manila Polo Club and will run every Sunday until June 23.

Ultimate is a non-contact, fast paced field sport where teams throw a Frisbee or sport disc up the field from teammate to teammate until it's caught in the opponent's end zone.

The 15 participating clubs are Ultimate Club, Breakfast Club, Huck U!, TODA, SPO1, SPO2, Jeepney, Whadda nice!, A- Bomb, K3, Espana United, Jogadores, Monsters, Askalz, POXS and Devils.

PUA is recognized by the World Flying Disc Federation, an affiliate of the International Olympic Committee.

EMPIRE KING RULES AGAIN
Multi-titled galloper Empire King, with jockey Jeffrey Ladiana on board, streaks along the final stretch to rule the recent 12th PCSO Silver Cup at the Santa Ana Park. Inset, owner David Lee receives the Silver Cup from PCSO chair Serge Valencia (second from left), as well as the replica check worth P1.1 million. Joining the post-race festivity were (from left) race officials Dr. Romy Buencamino, Henry Beech, Dee, lawyer Joe Malang, Rey Empremiado and lawyer Mon Ereñeta.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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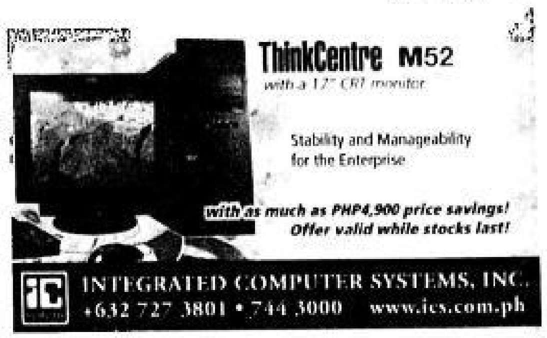

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Peso now 'uncomfortably strong'

Neda chief urges aid for country's battered export sector

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO, WHICH LAST WEEK BROKE INTO THE 45:$1 level for the first time in nearly seven years, has become "uncomfortably strong," according to Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

And with the currency hovering at that level, Neri said, the government must find ways to help the battered export sector.

"In the long run, (a strong peso) will have an impact on export growth, especially for those with local content," Neri told reporters last week. "That's unless we do it the way the Japanese did it: Keep on upgrading products so that even if they have to increase prices, their products are still marketable.

"We have to help our exporters in terms of upgrading quality and better credit terms."

A strong domestic currency has an adverse impact on dollar earners, like exporters, because they will get less pesos in exchange for their earnings. It also makes prices of their products less competitive, especially against manufacturing powerhouses in the region

BSP/ B8

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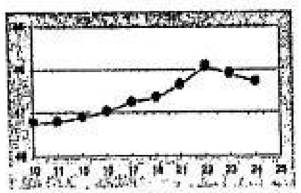

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Market seen to take a break

THE MARKET IS EXPECTED TO TAKE A breather after hitting fresh highs last week.

But traders said the long-term outlook on the stock market is still bullish, citing the rosy prospects now facing the Philippine economy.

"My moving average model indicates some correction or consolidation still, but I expect a more rangebound trading probably between 3,340 and 3,480. Note that Philippine equities remain of interest to foreign funds," PCCI Se-

MARKET/ B8

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▩ **15 insurance firms** up for suspension /B5
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RP eyes slice of $188-B medical tourism pie

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

AS THE PHILIPPINES RIDES THE wave of a resurgent tourism industry, public and private sector policymakers are also scrambling to have the country catch up with its neighbors in the field of medical tourism.

At stake is a lucrative piece of the pie, which the government estimates would grow to $188 billion worldwide by 2013, driven by the need for cheaper healthcare among the rising number of elderly and cash-rich citizens in developed countries.

Just like in the mainstream tourism industry, the country stands to benefit a

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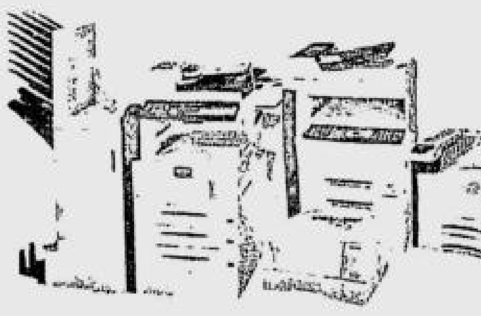

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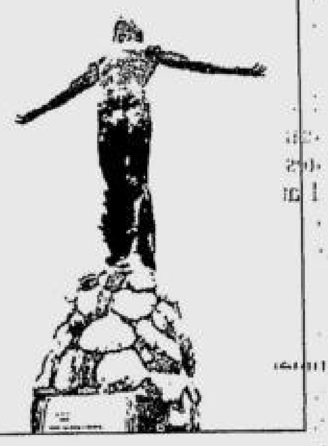

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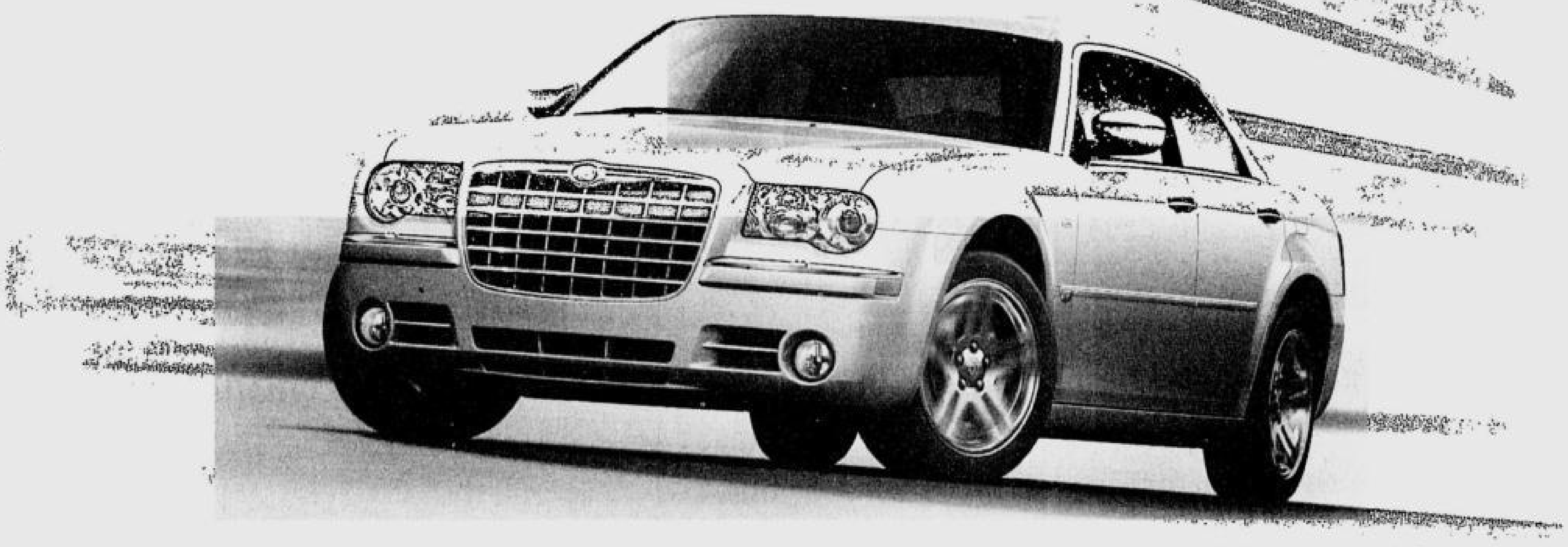

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Aging economies

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Cielito F. Habito

IN A RECENT VISIT TO THAIland, I was told by government planners that they were beginning to look at their aging population with concern. In a discussion I had with the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)—their equivalent to our Neda (National Economic and Development Authority)—I was told that for the first time, a long-term plan covering up to 25 years was being contemplated. And the motivation for this is demographic trends that are anticipated to imply dramatic structural challenges for the Thai economy in years ahead.

Incidentally, and unknown to many, Neda had already come up with such a long-term (25-year) plan back in the 1990s, at the instructions of then President Ramos. Officially known as Plan 21 (not to be confused with Philippine Agenda 21, the national agenda for sustainable development) or nicknamed the "Silver Plan," the document painted in broad strokes the vision, direction and strategies for Philippine development up to 2025.

Reversing pyramid

Unlike in the case of Thailand, the aging population was not of any significant concern in our own Plan 21 as I recall it. Why is it of such concern to the Thais now?

The Thais are obviously worried about the serious problems now faced by Japan and European countries like France and Germany, where birth rates have plummeted at the same time that people are living much longer. The "baby boom" generation is now at retirement age, and the far less numerous "baby bust" generation of the '70s and '80s are the ones now working to support the larger elderly population. In the language of the demographers, the dependency ratio—the share of nonworking population to the total population—is rising in the rich countries and new rich countries like Thailand, with the elderly nonworking population contributing more to the rise.

The typical population distribution had traditionally been one where younger people make up the bigger part, and the proportions narrow as one goes up the age scale. Thus, the age distribution bar graph typically resembled a pyramid. But as nations got richer, they produced a lot less babies, as life expectancies also rose. The graph is thus turning on its head, with the base of younger people getting narrower than the upper segment of the elderly.

Social security crisis

What is the problem with this? Among the more critical challenges such countries now face is the severe pressure on government finances due to collapsing social security systems. Put simply, there are far more people in these countries taking money out of the system (i.e. in retirement benefits) than active workers paying into it. Governments are being forced to cut back on benefits while raising contributions from active workers to cope with the situation, with predictably violent reactions from retirees and workers alike, as already seen in Europe in recent years.

The problem is, no one foresaw the reversal of the population pyramid when social security systems were first conceived. With the pyramid turning on its head, governments are incurring huge deficits with their bleeding social security systems. The common prescription now is to "privatize" social security and get the problem out of government's hands. Workers are now also urged to save for their own retirement through special individual retirement accounts made attractive by tax breaks. Another solution being suggested is to move the mandatory retirement beyond the current 65.

A lantern economy

There are clearly many other implications for an economy where senior citizens increasing-

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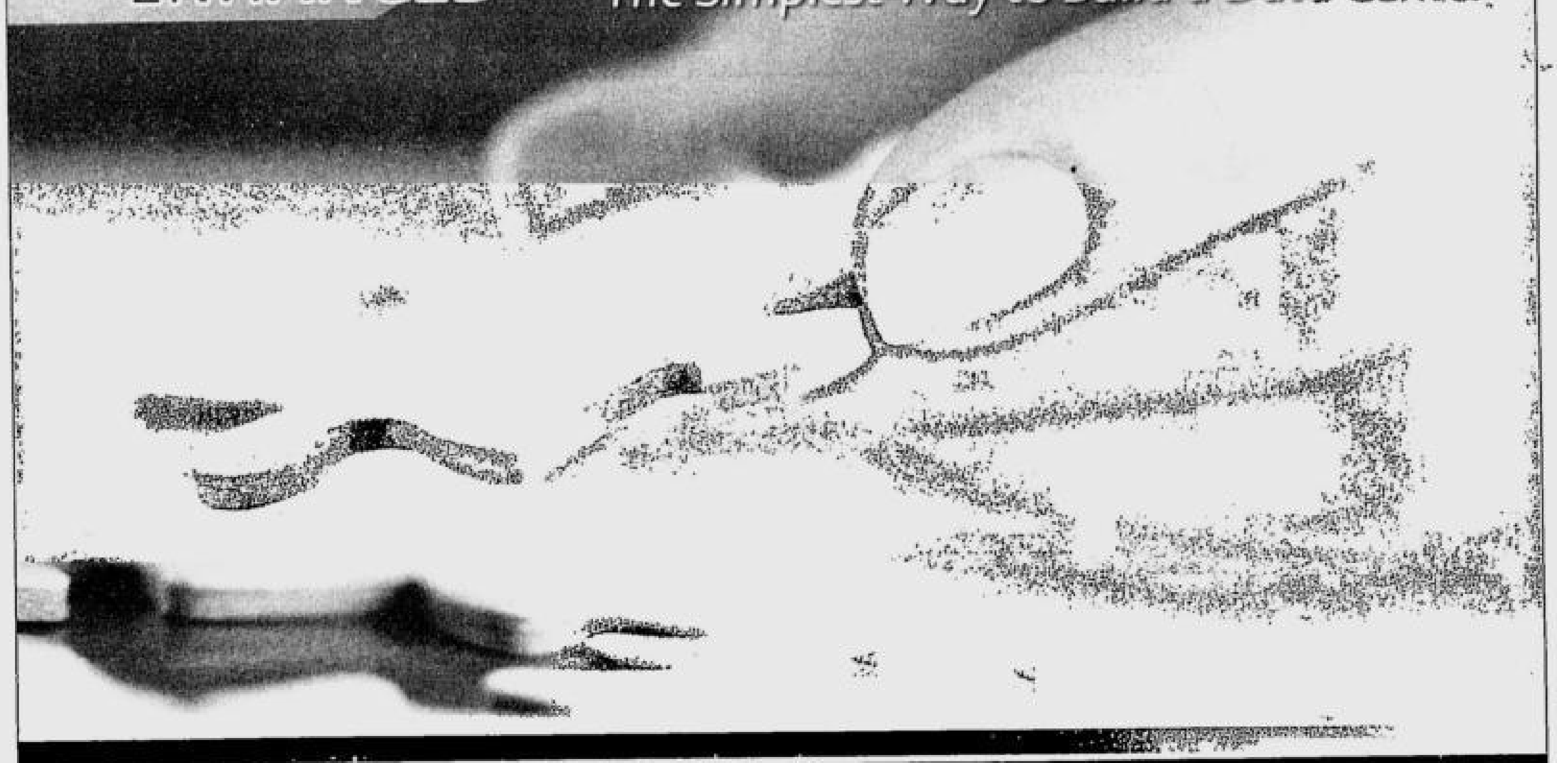

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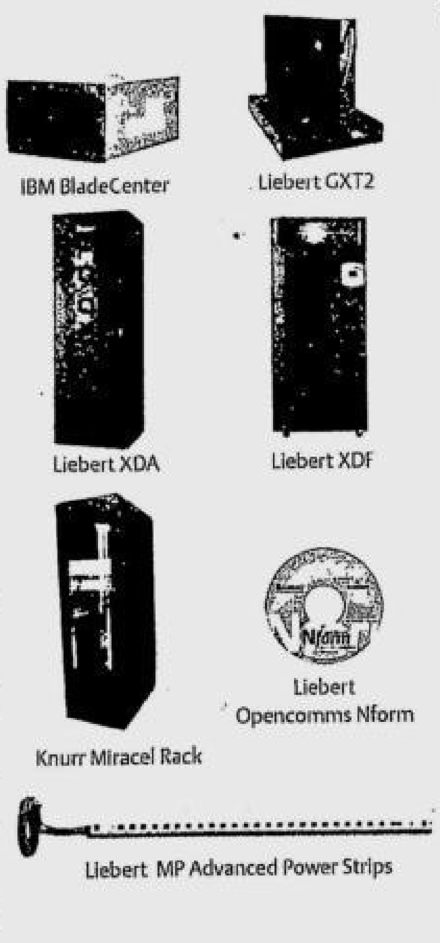

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BSP rules out monetary tightening anytime soon

Monetary Board seen to keep policy rates in upcoming meet

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has ruled out an increase in key policy rates over the near term, despite the pressures brought on by the influx of foreign funds into the country.

Although the BSP is expected to scrap the tiering system as soon as bank lending gains momentum, the consequent tightening will be offset with some reduction in the overnight borrowing rates, said Diwa Guinigundo, BSP officer-in-charge.

"When you tighten through an increase in policy rates, then the more flows you are inviting," Guinigundo said.

The BSP had eased monetary policy in November last year with the revival of the tiering system. Under the system, the BSP offers an interest rate of 7.5 percent on its first P5 billion of overnight borrowings from each bank. On placements in excess of P5 billion up to P10 billion, the BSP offers a lower rate of 5.5 percent. For any amount greater than P10 billion, a 3.5-percent rate is offered.

The policy-making Monetary Board is expected to maintain the BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates at 7.5 percent and 9.75 percent, respectively, during its meeting on May 31. But some analysts are saying there is a need for the BSP to tighten monetary settings in the succeeding months.

HSBC economist Frederic Neumann, for instance, said monetary conditions in the Philippines remained "remarkably loose" after the reintroduction of the tiering scheme on short-term borrowings.

Neumann believes that additional tightening, following recent measures to mop up excess liquidity through an expansion in access to special deposit accounts (SDAs), may be seen in the months ahead given the strong liquidity expansion due to remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

But Guinigundo said monetary tightening through the removal of the tiering system would not be possible until the issue of sluggish bank lending had been addressed.

"If you remove the tiering, all (the banks) will go to the BSP (to place their money)," he said. "So you have two situations requiring different responses. Using just one instrument will make your response less effective."

As such, he said, the BSP would have to keep the overnight policy rates and the tiering system for now.

"The situation will change when you see lending growth picking up, when there's enough momentum," Guinigundo said. "We can bring down policy rates a bit once the tiering is removed. But we also have to be concerned on the signal that we'll be sending to the market."

At this point, Guinigundo said, it would be difficult to bring down interest rates despite the favorable outlook on inflation.

"If you bring it down, it will be counter-intuitive, because you have excess liquidity," he said. "If you bring it down, you'll be releasing more liquidity into the system, because they'll pull (funds) out of the BSP. When you increase interest rates on the other hand, it's also counter intuitive because inflation outlook is very good."

With strong remittances continuing to exert pressure on the peso, HSBC's Neumann said "sterilization" operations at this point may not be as effective. While inflation is the primary concern of the BSP, he said other variables cannot be ignored entirely. Sterilization operations would allow the central bank to maintain control over domestic monetary conditions while it smoothens exchange rate volatility.

PNOC Alternative Fuels gets new $1-B commitment

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC ALTERNATIVE FUELS CORP. (PNOC-AFC), a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co., is set to sign a $1-billion agreement with Tian Biogreen Energy Ltd. for the establishment of a jatropha nursery and plantation in the country.

In an interview on the sidelines of the Biofuels and Feedstocks Philippines conference last week, PNOC-AFC president Peter Anthony Abaya said the company was willing to go straight to signing an actual agreement with the state firm, without going through the memorandum of understanding stage.

"It's a $1-billion commitment," he said. "The company doesn't want an MOU; it wants to go straight to signing an MOA. We just need to iron out some details, particularly the commercial arrangement."

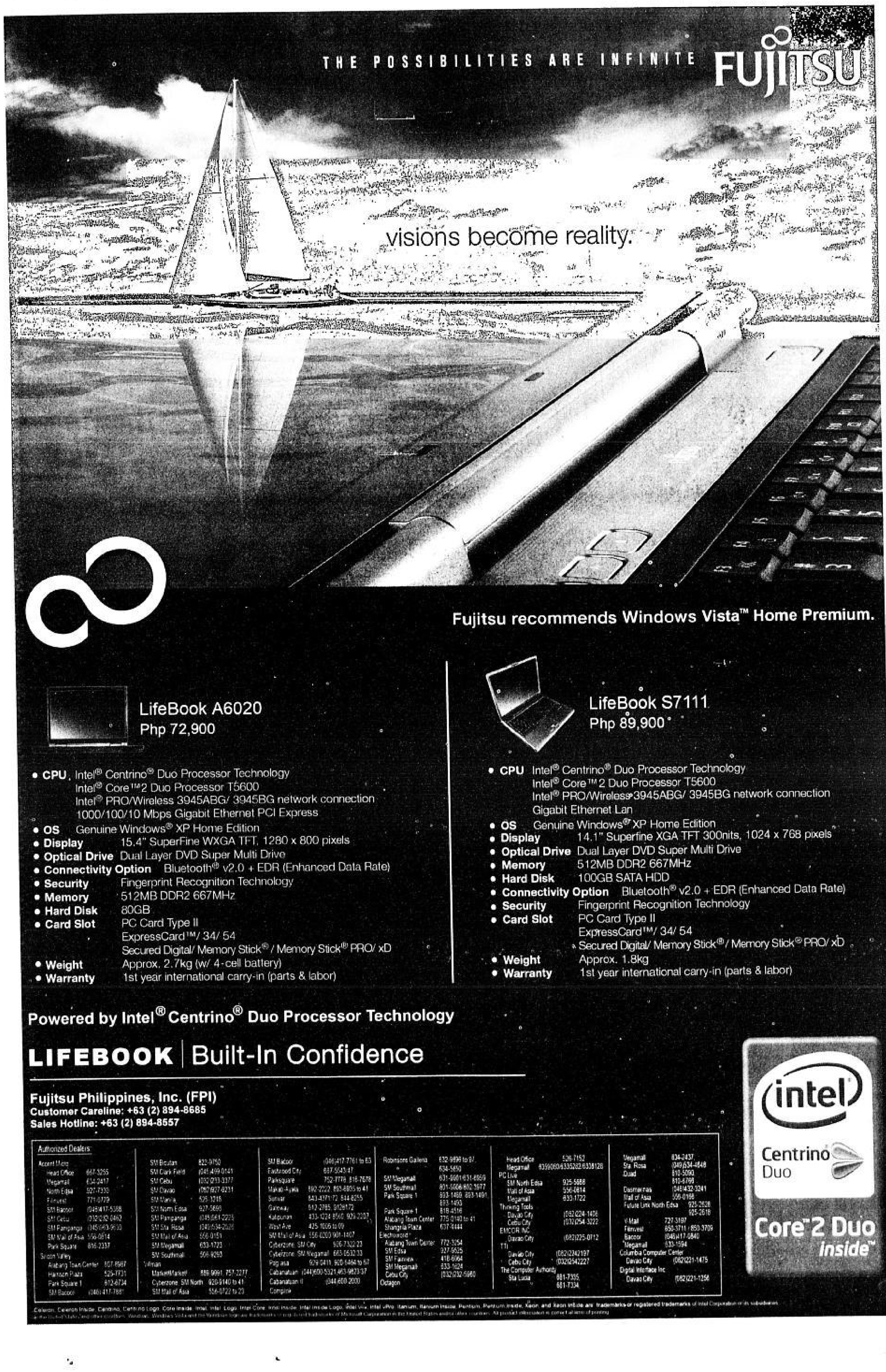
He related that Tian Biogreen had the capacity to produce enough seedlings to fill a 700,000-ha jatropha plantation in less than two years.

The company's technology would complement research currently being done by the University of the Philippines in Los Baños and the Department of Science and Technology with regard to the cultivation of jatropha seedlings and actual jatropha plants, he added.

Lim Hong Hui of Tian Biogreen confirmed the company's investment commitment to PNOC-AFC, saying it was ready to sign an agreement as soon as all pertinent details are worked out.

"We're looking at the details," he told the INQUIRER. "We also need to sort out the financial side of things. As soon as we work out the details—location of the land and commercial arrangement—we're ready to sign an agreement."

The investment, spanning five years, would cover the establishment of 3.5 million metric tons of bio-refinery capacity, 1 million hectares of jatropha plantations, and 300,000 MT of ethanol capacity.



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ICTSI launches container booking online

By Riza T. Olchondra

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERMINAL Services Inc. (ICTSI) announced over the weekend that it has started an Internet-based service called Web Booking for export containers at its flagship Manila International Container Terminal (MICT).

Web Booking was created to complement MICT's new gate technology, an automated entry system that features computer imaging and tracking systems, boom barriers, weighbridges, truck portals with imaging cameras, automated driver transaction kiosks and radiation portal monitors.

Through Web Booking, which can be accessed at www.mictweb.com, shipping lines' trucks no longer have to pass through the administration check for export containers and can go directly to the entrance gates, saving time and resources.

Electronic data interchange is also possible through the Container Announcement Message feature, a standard message exchange implemented worldwide.

The Web Booking system can report and monitor cargo status so that shipping lines can have real-time updates on a cargo's status upon its entry until exit from the MICT.

Before Web Booking, shipping line clients of MICT used the printed export container order form for container bookings.

The form is manually presented at MICT's administration check area, where data is manually encoded into the booking system. After the container is booked, only then will the container be allowed entry through the gates. Upon entry, checkers manually inspect containers before allowing loading at the stacking yard.

With the paperless procedure, the long lines at the administration check area will disappear, while inconsistencies will be resolved as the shipping lines themselves encode the data. Also, tampering will be easier to prevent.

"The advent of the new gate system and, in particular, the introduction of the Web Booking service, has been well received by the shipping lines," Tommy Ysip, ICTSI Systems/ Process development manager and project head for Web Booking, said in a statement. "The new system has helped raise efficiency in the handling of containers and eradicate queues.

"Overall, it has helped improve productivity and efficiency in the terminal."

No Free Lunch

From page B3

ly make up a substantial portion of the population. Obviously, the nature of public services, commodities and services needed would be very different from those in an economy where younger consumers dominate the market. Retirement homes and settlements and caregiver services are among the current high-growth industries in such economies, and economies like ours with still relatively young populations are cashing in on the trend. There are of course profound social, cultural and political implications of an aging society as well, which I will not take up here. These, I am told, are what the Thais would now like to plan better for.

Meanwhile, rather than turn into a reverse pyramid, the Philippine population profile is looking increasingly like a lantern, and our dependency ratio has been falling, rather than rising. From 64.3 percent in 2005, it is projected to drop to 46.3 percent by 2025. Japan is projected to have 68.2 by then, from the current 50.2. Thailand's ratio will rise from 40.8 to 46.6.

Family planting?

Do all this imply that having 18 million more Filipinos (the population of the whole of Mindanao) than Thais now, from having exactly equal populations in 1960, was not such a bad thing after all? Should we abandon population management efforts and family planning programs? Well, not quite. There remain compelling reasons, especially at the individual family welfare level, why Filipino families should have the ability and options for planning the size of their families. As the old joke goes, family planning is still much better than family planting.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

15 insurance firms up for suspension

By Michelle V. Remo

THE LICENSES OF 15 INSURANCE COMPANIES may be suspended following their failure to meet the P100-million capitalization requirement for 2006, the Insurance Commission said.

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said her office would send notices to these firms, which would be required to put up additional cash to meet the capitalization requirement.

"Those who cannot put up the needed capital will have their licenses suspended," Escobillo told reporters. "This means they will not be allowed to sell insurance products and will only be required to service insurance claims."

One life insurance company—Generali Pilipinas Assurance—was unable to meet the capitalization requirement for 2006.

The 14 nonlife insurance firms unable to meet the same requirement were: Asia United Insurance Inc., Covenant Assurance Co. Inc., Easterns Assurance & Surety Corp., Finman General Assurance Corp., First Integrated Bonding & Insurance Insurance Co. Inc., Generali Pilipinas Insurance Co. Inc., Investors Assurance Corp.;

Manila Insurance Co. Inc., Meridian Assurance Corp., Monarch Insurance Co. Inc., Oriental Assurance Corp., Solid Guaranty Inc., Summit Guaranty & Insurance Co. Inc. and Travellers Insurance & Surety Corp.

Escobillo said the list of insurance companies that failed to meet the capitalization requirement was based on financial statements submitted as of May 23.

She said that three more life insurance firms and nine nonlife insurance companies have not yet submitted their financial statements.

The insurance commissioner said her office was becoming strict with the monitoring of the compliance of insurance companies with capitalization and other requirements. She said improving their level of financial discipline was needed to strengthen the industry and, in the process, gain more public confidence on insurance.

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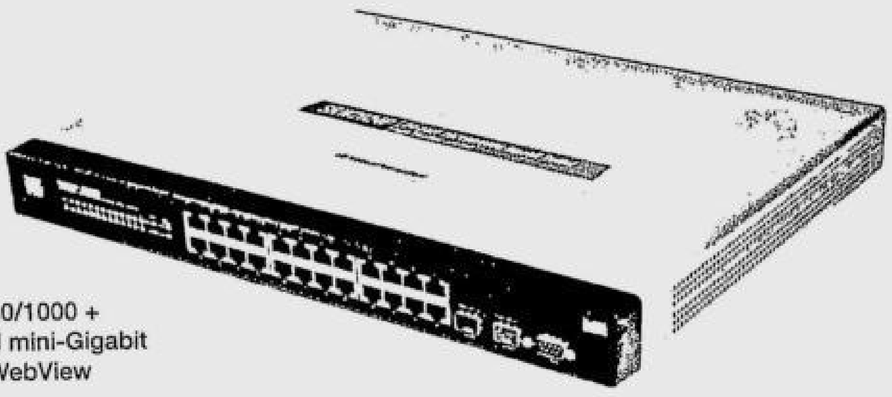

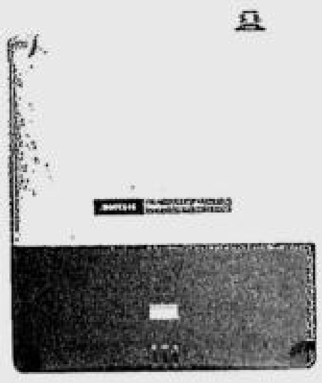

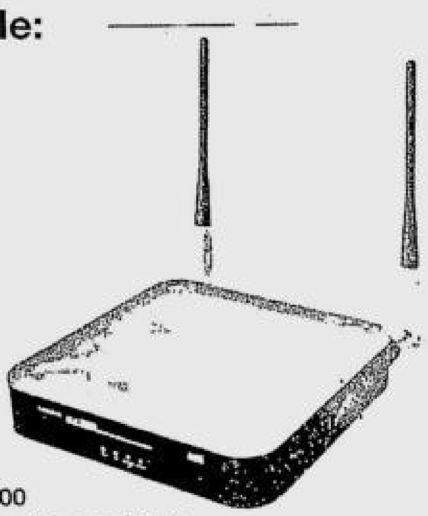

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NISSAN

Listed firms posted 27.5% growth in profit last year

Benefits from improving economic environment

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE COMBINED NET INCOME OF local firms listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) grew 27.5 percent to P261.1 billion in 2006 from year-ago's P204.75 billion, the PSE said citing its own research.

PSE president Francis Lim said last year's performance of listed companies was a clear proof that improvements in the economic environment, especially the declining interest and inflation rates, had been benefiting companies.

Sustained growth

The exchange's research was based on the financial statements submitted as of May 8 by 234 listed companies, including firms under the small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) board.

"The increase in the combined income of the listed companies bolsters perceptions that the economy stands on solid ground," Lim said.

This, he added, also enabled the stock market to sustain its growth.

Local stock prices, as tracked by the PSEi, went up by 42.3 percent last year; 15 percent in 2005; 26.4 percent in 2004, and 41.6 percent in 2003.

"This also explains why the PSEi has reached new highs," Lim said.

New highs

The PSEi last week set an all-time high record, surpassing the previous record set more than 10 years ago.

"I believe the listed companies can further improve their income performance and drive stock prices higher, provided the same favorable factors that fueled their growth last year remain intact this year," Lim stressed.

Prospects good

The prospects, he said, looked good given reports of higher corporate earnings in the first quarter of the year.

Lim said the combined gross revenue of the listed companies last year rose 14 percent to P2.2 trillion from P1.94 trillion a year earlier.

"The jump in income did not benefit just a few sectors, because firms in all six sectors, along with those in the SME board, enjoyed higher earnings last year," Lim said.

Firms under the SME board recorded the best performance last year with a growth of 511 percent, as companies reversed the P3.44-million net loss posted in 2005 and posted P14.14 million in net income in 2006.

On the main board, the industrial sector recorded the highest growth in income at 54 percent as combined net earnings of companies in this sector jumped to P80.87 billion in 2006 from P52.54 billion a year ago. Firms belonging to the industrial sector also accounted for the biggest share of the income at 31 percent and the largest share of the revenue pie at P1.09 trillion.

All sectors up

Firms listed under the financial sector reported a combined net earnings of almost P40 billion, up 34.4 percent from year-ago's P29.75 billion.

Holding firms accounted for the third-biggest share of total income at P54.13 billion last year, which was 33.1 percent higher than the P40.66 billion recorded in 2005.

The net earnings of firms in the mining and oil sector jumped 33.4 percent to P5.04 billion in 2006 from P3.77 billion a year earlier; those in the property sector expanded by 6.3 percent to P18.77 billion; and in the services sector, by 3.2 percent to P62.31 billion.

The combined earnings of companies that make up the 30-company PSEi went up by 33.5 percent to P189.92 billion from P142.30 billion the previous year.

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(As of May 25, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.5	11,300
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	70	70	68	68.5	1,242,900
71	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	68	68	66.5	67	1,386,600
935	630	China Banking Corp.	905	910	905	910	2,100
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
124	63	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	117	117	117	117	110,690
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.55	3,860,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	66.5	66.5	66	66.5	5,301,000
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	48	48	47.5	47.5	456,600
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	6,000
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	33	33	31.5	32	845,400
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	82.5	84	82.5	84	103,800
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	66	66	65	65.5	2,554,400
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.67	290,000
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	7	7	6.9	7	49,000
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	5,084,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	590	590	585	590	2,130
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,090.00	2,090.00	2,090.00	2,090.00	210
1.94	1.04	Vantage Corp	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	1,780,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
63.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59.5	60.5	58.5	60.5	290,000
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	79	80	79	80	1,611,600
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.5	1,794,000
96	13	Manila Electric Co. A	90	90.5	89	90.5	140,300
97	20.25	Manila Electric Co. B	90	91	89.5	90	2,560,500
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6	6	5.9	5.9	9,290,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	3,018,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.4	1.46	1,793,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.4	65,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.16	2.16	731,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26.5	7,200
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	55.5	56	55	56	276,900
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.46	1,011,000
4.05	2.3	Roxas Holdings	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	4,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	69	69	67.5	67.5	29,900
88	68	San Miguel Corp. B	78	78	76	77	36,600
22	15.5	Universal Robina Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	2,890,600
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.7	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.5	635,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.15	4.15	4.1	4.1	201,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	222,000
7	1.1	Republic Cement Corp.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.7	18,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.88	1.86	1.84	1.86	10,161,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6	6	5.7	6	18,777,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	30,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	[illegible]	[illegible]	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	42,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	21,900,000
1.04	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.9	1.04	0.89	0.99	147,610,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	113,000,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	2,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	3,878,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	385,400,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.3	6,627,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.81	260,000
0.78	0.085	Asia Amalgamated Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	130,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.12	3,045,000
1.1	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	30,000
566.67	272.92	Ayala Corp.	515	515	500	505	110,110
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	28,200
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.55	111,000
4.75	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	30,417,000
9.2	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.7	1,842,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	988,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	317,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	12.5	11.75	12.5	589,800
2.7	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	1,000
2.6	0.8	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	1,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
13.25	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.5	12.75	11.5	12	1,044,700
4.55	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.05	2,598,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	30,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	30,000
0.57	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.51	9,230,000
445	205	SM Investments Corp.	440	442.5	435	442.5	437,930
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	318,000
0.67	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.58	0.64	0.56	0.62	139,660,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	50,000
1.56	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.46	1.56	1.46	1.56	1,030,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.17	0.2	0.17	0.185	44,920,000
0.55	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	50,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc	1.76	1.84	1.76	1.82	1,696,000
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	210,000
16	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	25,095,600
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.56	1.58	24,314,000
3.9	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	3.55	3.65	3.5	3.6	1,427,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.5	48,000
4.5	1.42	City and Land Developers Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	11,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	21,000
0.58	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.51	0.58	0.51	0.55	10,690,000
0.59	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.52	19,310,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.78	0.8	11,100,000
0.28	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.245	0.28	0.24	0.26	58,720,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.89	0.8	0.87	31,360,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.9	1.92	17,368,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	10,000,000
0.89	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.41	3,280,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.73	0.81	0.73	0.74	9,040,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4	4	3.85	3.85	52,002,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.4	4.45	313,000
0.26	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.19	0.215	0.19	0.2	37,470,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	4,870,000
3.95	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	74,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	19.75	20	19.5	20	10,886,400
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	4.95	5	4.9	4.9	779,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	10,579,800
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	800,000
0.28	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.26	55,250,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.38	1.32	1.34	2,335,000
		MEDIA					
32	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	31	32	31	32	34,500
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	50,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.56	1,289,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,345.00	1,345.00	1,325.00	1,335.00	90,620
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,480.00	2,550.00	2,480.00	2,505.00	478,370
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp	6.9	7	6.7	7	4,745,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.31	0.26	0.28	111,960,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.5	8.8	8.5	8.8	591,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,037,000
0.085	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0725	0.085	0.07	0.08	198,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. A	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	5,000,000
2.9	1.78	Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.16	342,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.06	18,300,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.46	218,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.048	0.05	104,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc	2.06	2.14	2.02	2.14	724,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp	1.78	1.8	1.74	1.74	14,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.9	6	5.9	6	256,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc	29	29	28.5	29	1,294,600
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.7	3.7	7,540,000
5	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	5	5	5	5	100,000
0.76	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.72	0.76	0.69	0.72	33,000,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.95	3,830,000
		EDUCATION					
966.67	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	800	805	800	805	2,540
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.15	71,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
28.5	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc	28	28.5	28	28.5	45,500
4.75	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.6	4.75	4.5	4.7	4,054,000
16.75	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.75	16.25	15.5	16.25	1,041,000
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	25.5	26	25.5	26	96,600
90	22	Prime Gaming Philippines Inc	90	90	90	90	1,000
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	171,500,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	1,180,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	114,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	19.5	19.5	19	19.25	5,727,900
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	51,000
4	1.52	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1,000
2.24	0.0602	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.12	92,457,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	20,250,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	7,710,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	190,400,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.038	64,200,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	69,000,000
6.1	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	19,479,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	26.5	27	73,900
1.2	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp	1.06	1.2	0.98	1.16	60,580,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	17,825,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.42	0.44	9,110,000
0.021	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	184,400,000
0.022	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.022	64,900,000
25.5	1.5	PNOC Exploration Corp. B	23	23	23	23	1,000
14.52	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	70,500
0.024	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	718,400,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 25, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.744602	1.000000	46.1140
Japan	Yen	0.006136	0.008241	0.3800
United Kingdom	Pound	1.478109	1.985100	91.5409
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095179	0.127825	5.8945
Switzerland	Franc	0.606452	0.814465	37.5582
Canada	Dollar	0.686838	0.922424	42.5367
Singapore	Dollar	0.487177	0.654279	30.1714
Australia	Dollar	0.610930	0.820479	37.8356
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.975123	2.652590	122.3215
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198550	0.266652	12.2964
Brunei	Dollar	0.485589	0.652146	30.0731
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022701	0.030488	1.4059
UAE	Dirham	0.202833	0.272405	12.5617
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.343000	61.9311
Korea	Won	0.000800	0.001074	0.0495
China	Yuan**	0.097309	0.130686	6.0265
Argentina	Peso	0.241440	0.324254	14.9526
Brazil	Real	0.378450	0.508259	23.4379
Denmark	Kroner	0.134238	0.180281	8.3135
India	Rupee	0.018417	0.024734	1.1406
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219776	0.295159	13.6110
Mexico	New Peso	0.068705	0.092271	4.2550
New Zealand	Dollar	0.540075	0.725321	33.4475
South Africa	Rand	0.104185	0.139921	6.4523
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022363	0.030034	1.3850

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 24, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of May 24, 2007

GG&A Club Shares

SEC License Broker No.: BD-00131

Quotation as of May 28, 2007

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,100,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,250,000	1,050,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	550,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	470,000	430,000
CANYON WOODS	100,000	-
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	-
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	-	1,750,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	110,000	100,000
CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	80,000
EAGLERIDGE "B"	250,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "C"	350,000	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	85,000	60,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	200,000	180,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	230,000	180,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	-	17,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	-	16,000,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	3,300,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	300,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	700,000	630,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	150,000
MIMOSA (IND)	200,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	170,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	290,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	370,000	350,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	160,000	140,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	300,000	230,000
SPA & LODGE	Please Call	500,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,500,000
STA. ELENA "B"	2,150,000	1,600,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	290,000	-
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	700,000	650,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	670,000	650,000
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	380,000	330,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	-
VALLEY GOLF	Please Call	200,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	-	8,200,000

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As of May 28, 2007

SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/Pls. Call*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*
Baguio Country Club	600,000	530,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	280,000
Canlubang Golf	470,000	430,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	360,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls Call
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	150,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	140,000/200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	80,000/130,000*
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls Call	Pls Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/170,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls Call	-
Manila Golf Individual	Pls Call	16,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls Call	3,050,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	250,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	200,000/230,000*	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa C1/C2*/C3**	220,000	180,000
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	-
Punta Fuego	Pls Call	Pls Call
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	Pls Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	130,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls Call	230,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/170,000*	180,000*
Splendido Taal	280,000	Pls Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls Call	1,500,000
Subic Golf	190,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Club	380,000	Pls. Call
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	300,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls Call	Pls Call
The Country Club	2,200,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	230,000	200,000
Valle Verde Ind.	180,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	-	8,200,000

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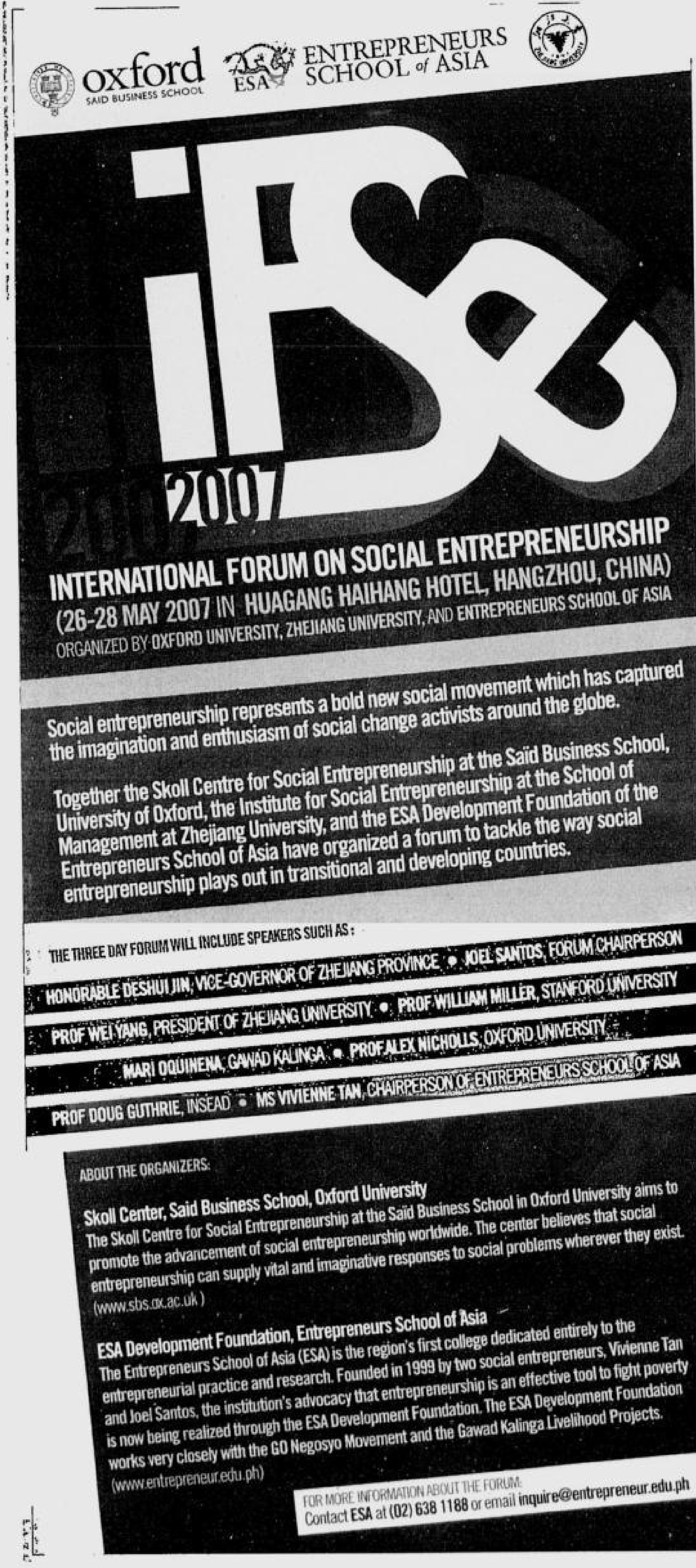

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iPSe 2007

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
(26-28 MAY 2007 IN HUAGANG HAIHANG HOTEL, HANGZHOU, CHINA)
ORGANIZED BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY, ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY, AND ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL OF ASIA

Social entrepreneurship represents a bold new social movement which has captured the imagination and enthusiasm of social change activists around the globe.

Together the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship at the School of Management at Zhejiang University, and the ESA Development Foundation of the Entrepreneurs School of Asia have organized a forum to tackle the way social entrepreneurship plays out in transitional and developing countries.

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HONORABLE DESHUI JIN, VICE-GOVERNOR OF ZHEJIANG PROVINCE • PROF WILLIAM MILLER, STANFORD UNIVERSITY
PROF WEI YANG, PRESIDENT OF ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY • PROF ALEX NICHOLLS, OXFORD UNIVERSITY
MARI OQUINENA, GAWAD KALINGA • MS VIVIENNE TAN, CHAIRPERSON OF ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL OF ASIA
PROF DOUG GUTHRIE, INSEAD

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The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the Saïd Business School in Oxford University aims to promote the advancement of social entrepreneurship worldwide. The center believes that social entrepreneurship can supply vital and imaginative responses to social problems wherever they exist.
(www.sbs.ox.ac.uk)

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The Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA) is the region's first college dedicated entirely to the entrepreneurial practice and research. Founded in 1999 by two social entrepreneurs, Vivienne Tan and Joel Santos, the institution's advocacy that entrepreneurship is an effective tool to fight poverty is now being realized through the ESA Development Foundation. The ESA Development Foundation works very closely with the GO Negosyo Movement and the Gawad Kalinga Livelihood Projects.
(www.entrepreneur.edu.ph)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORUM:
Contact ESA at (02) 638 1188 or email inquire@entrepreneur.edu.ph

US firm to put up $150-M ethanol plant

E-Cane Fuel's facility to start commercial operations in 2009

By Abigail L. Ho

UNITED STATES-BASED E-CANE Fuel Corp. is putting up in Pampanga a $150-million ethanol plant with a capacity of 150 million liters a year.

This is the company's first investment in Asia.

In an interview with reporters, E-Cane Fuel chair and chief executive Jean-Pierre Monclin said work started on the ethanol plant about six months ago, and it should be ready for commercial operations by 2009.

Feedstock for the ethanol distillery would come from a sugarcane plantation spanning 10,000-20,000 hectares, most likely to be developed in Tarlac, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, he said.

The distillery would use clean technology that would allow the company to extract the most alcohol from sugarcane, he said, adding that this technology was the best and most advanced in the world today.

Once operational, he said the output of the plant would primarily go to the domestic market, but some will be exported to Japan and South Korea.

Asked why the company chose the Philippines as an investment site, Monclin said it was a combination of things, chief of which was the country's strategic location.

"It's the best location for us, very strategic. It also has good land, good people and good weather," he said.

Apart from producing ethanol from the plant, he said the company was also planning to "return something to the local communities."

"The project has several components. Since it will use clean technology, we'll be helping the environment. We also have a strong social program for the community. The bottom line is we want to promote social growth," he said.

The government expects to get more investments into the biofuels sector, following the passage of the Biofuels Act of 2006 earlier this year.

Under the Biofuels Act, all diesel-fed vehicles should use a minimum 1-percent biodiesel blend within three months of the effectivity of the law. Gasoline, on the other hand, should have at least a 5-percent ethanol blend within two years of the law's effectivity.

The mandated blend will rise to 2 percent for biodiesel after two years, and to at least 10 percent for bio-ethanol after four years.

Subic shipbuilder clinches orders from Germany, Greece

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SOUTH KOREAN SHIPBUILDER HANJIN Heavy Industries and Construction Corp. has received orders for at least nine container ships which would be built in the company's shipyard in Subic.

These orders, worth about $950 million, came shortly after Hanjin's Subic facility opened.

According to one of the firm's client, NSC Schifffahrtsgesellschaft mbH und Cie KG of Germany, its order of four vessels worth $650 million would be delivered starting 2010.

Danaos Corp. of Greece, which ordered five vessels at a cost "within the region of $300 million," said it was expecting its ships to be delivered between November 2009 and June of 2010.

Further, Korean media quoted a Hanjin spokesperson as saying that the company won contracts worth $2.2 billion covering 21 container and bulk ships for delivery within two and a half years.

These orders came from clients in France, Turkey and India, and all of the ships to be delivered to these markets will be built in Subic.

In a statement, German shipping fund specialist Lloyds Fond AG—which is handling NSC's order—said the deal was signed last week for four 12,825-TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) ships with an option for an additional four of the same.

These 365.6-meter long 48.4-meter wide vessels, which can accommodate up to 1,000 containers have been designed to fit the Panama Canal after its planned enlargement.

This is the second batch of order from Hamburg-based NSC, whose first order covers six 4,300-TEU ships that are already queued in one of the Subic shipyard's production line.

In a separate statement, Athens-based Danaos announced it had signed up for five 3,400-TEU vessels, which was also an additional batch of order for five ships from Hanjin.

"Danaos will take delivery of these vessels at a time when building berths for large containerships around the world are becoming increasingly hard to find," the firm said in a statement. "We have also arranged for 10-year charters for all of these vessels at accretive rates with a major liner company."

The vessels would be powered by Korean-built electronic engines providing improved efficiency, lower emissions and with a design speed of 23 knots, it added.

HHIC-Philippines Inc., Hanjin's local subsidiary, switched on the still plate cutting machine in Subic last April 19, signaling the start of production at the Redondo Peninsula.

HHIC-PI built the shipyard complex on a 480-hectare land in the peninsula with a committed investment of $1 billion. The project is expected to create job opportunities for some 30,000 direct and indirect employees.

The switch-on happened in less than 14 months after signing the memorandum of agreement for the construction of the shipyard.

Some 4,000 people have already been employed during the pre-operation and construction phase.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, the facility is expected to bring in up to $3.5 billion worth of investments in export industries.

FLI sets aside ₱16B for 3-year expansion plan

PROPERTY FIRM FILINVEST LAND INC. IS setting aside P16 billion for its expansion in the next three years, which will involve mainly housing projects, said FLI first vice president Fely Ramos.

The boom in the property sector has been fueled by record low interest rates, an increase in remittances from overseas Filipino workers and strong demand for office spaces, especially from business process outsourcing firms.

FLI said its three-year expansion plan would be financed with cash generated from operations, borrowings and the P5.9 billion in proceeds from the company's additional shares offering.

Under the plan, FLI will set aside P5 billion for 2007, P5.3 billion for 2008 and P6.1 billion for 2009.

The company will focus on low- and middle-income housing projects, high-end, leisure and farm estates, a condominium hotel in Cebu, the Northgate Cyberzone, and medium-rise buildings.

In 2007 alone, FLI has listed 14 projects for launching. These include condotels, medium-rise buildings and residential resort communities.

The company is also expanding to areas outside Greater Metro Manila, particularly in high growth regional centers.

There is an ongoing expansion in North Luzon with the development of Somerset Lane in Tarlac and Hampton Orchards and Claremont Village in Pampanga.

Kembali Coast in Samal Island, Davao, is a beachfront residential resort development. This 50-hectare Asian-Balinese inspired island getaway offers exclusivity within a 1.8-kilometer beachfront that offers unobstructed view of the sea. Other regional projects are Escala in Cebu and West Palms in Puerto Princesa, Palawan. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

FDC profit up 952%

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

HOLDING FIRM FILINVEST DEvelopment Corp. said its net income for the first quarter grew 952 percent to P1.6 billion, from only P150 million in same period 2006.

The growth was attributed to the sale of the shares of its property arm, Filinvest Land Inc.

FDC president Josephine Gotianun-Yap said in a disclosure that the holding firm reported a net extraordinary gain of P1.1 billion from the sale by affiliate Filinvest Alabang Inc. (FAI) of its shares in FLI during an additional offering of shares last February 2007.

But even without this extraordinary gain, net income from regular operations still soared 213 percent to P470 million.

The real estate sales of lots, condominiums and club shares by its affiliate companies—FLI and FAI—increased by 61 percent.

Yap said net real estate revenue jumped from P762 million to P2.8 billion.

As of March 31, total assets of FDC stood at P94.6 billion from P86.1 billion of 2006 while total equity is P45.7 billion from P36.1 billion.

For 2007, FDC is fast-tracking development in Seascapes Resort Town in Mactan Island, Cebu, a 12-hectare residential resort community that offers a 2.5 hectare beach club, fully furnished casitas, villas, condominiums and premium lots.

FDC will also launch this year a project in Fort Bonifacio.

FDC also remains confident about its prospects in 2007.

"The last five years were focused on building financial strength among subsidiaries by improving bottom lines, increasing cash flow generation and carefully managing financial leverage.

2nd Puregold convention set

IN A BID TO ENRICH AND PAY HOMAGE TO the entrepreneurial spirit of the Pinoy, Puregold Price Club Inc. will launch yet another convention exclusively for *sari-sari* store (corner store) owners and other business-minded individuals who plan to embark on small-scale ventures.

The three-day Puregold convention dubbed, "Ang Tindahan ni Aling Puring," aims to provide means by which Filipino families, who have begun small neighborhood stores, can further expand their businesses and become more active players in the thriving industry.

The sari-sari store convention will be held from May 31 to June 2, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., at the World Trade Center in Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

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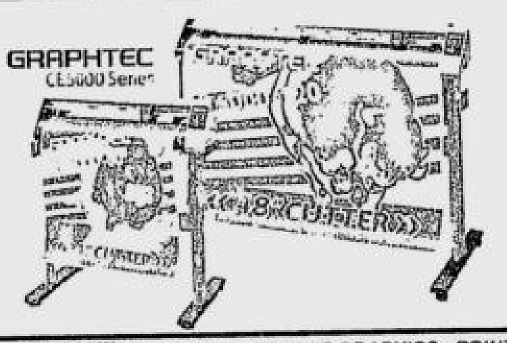

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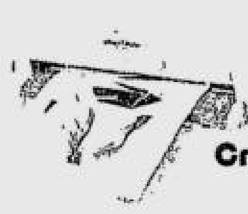

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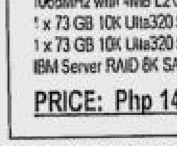

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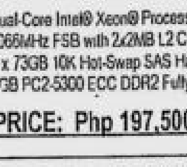

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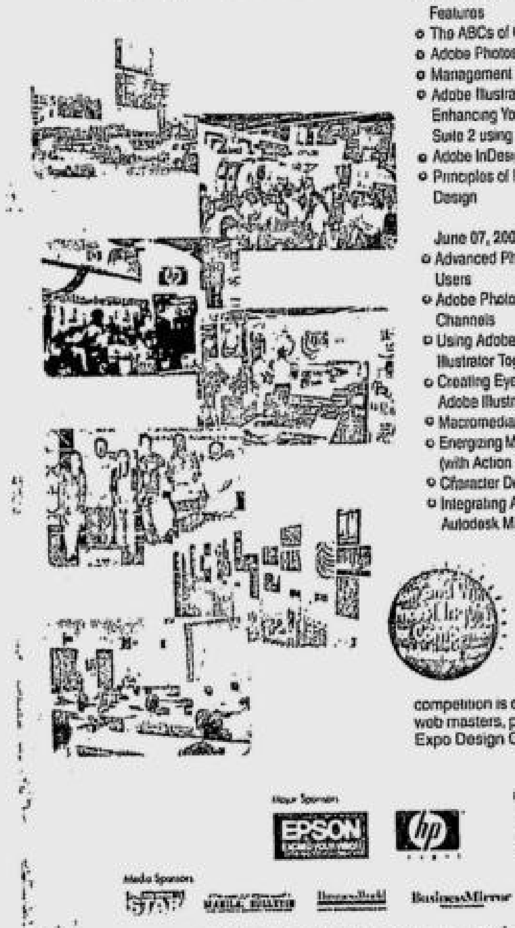

SEMINAR TOPICS & SCHEDULE

June 06, 2007, Wednesday
- Beginning Adobe Photoshop CS3
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: The New Features
- The ABCs of Color Management
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Color
- Management and Printing
- Adobe Illustrator CS2 Tips and Tricks Enhancing Your Workflow in Creative Suite 2 using Adobe Bridge
- Adobe InDesign CS2 Styles Made Easy
- Principles of Effective Publications Design

June 07, 2007, Thursday
- Advanced Photoshop CS3 for Power Users
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Mastering Channels
- Using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator Together
- Creating Eye-Popping Graphics with Adobe Illustrator CS2
- Macromedia Flash 8 Cartooning
- Energizing Macromedia Flash 8 Projects (with Action Script)
- Character Design in Autodesk 3DS Max
- Integrating Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Autodesk Maya 8

June 08, 2007, Friday
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Advance Image Compositing
- Digital Painting with Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Painter IX.5
- Photographing People: Secrets of Professional Photographer Revealed
- Glamour Nude & Bodyscapes Photography
- Macromedia Dreamweaver 8 Power User Tips and Tricks
- Beyond Power Point: Macromedia Flash 8 for Corporate Presentations
- Turn Your Final Cut Pro Project into a DVD
- DVD Authoring Basics with Encore DVD 2.0

June 09, 2007, Saturday
- Adobe Photoshop CS3 for Portrait Photographers
- Digital Darkroom using Adobe Photoshop CS3
- Final Cut Pro from Raw Footage to DVD
- Visual Magic with Adobe After Effects 7.0
- Basic Video Editing with Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0
- Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0: Tips and Tricks
- Making Powerful Corporate Presentation Materials and Web Projects

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New rules on special deposit account mop up ₱100B in excess liquidity

SDA now a potent monetary tool

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS siphoned off about P90 billion to P100 billion in excess liquidity in the system since it gave banks' trust departments access to its special deposit account facility last May 10, a monetary official estimated on Friday.

This is on top of about P2.2 billion in funds placed by government-owned and -controlled corporations and financial institutions, which were likewise allowed to tap the SDAs, the official added.

This convinced the BSP that the recent changes in the rules governing the SDAs had made what used to be an underutilized facility into a more potent monetary tool.

"We can easily achieve the goal of bringing down the growth in domestic liquidity to below 20 percent," the official said.

The official added it might even be possible to attain this goal during the first month of implementing the SDA reforms.

The new SDA rules allow the trust departments of banks and even nonbank state corporations to place funds with the BSP and earn various interest rates depending on the term of the placements. Such alternative placements are not backed by any collateral unlike the central bank's overnight borrowings.

To make the SDAs more attractive, the BSP made placement in these instruments considered as compliance to the 50 percent liquidity floor requirement on banks. The liquidity floor is the portion of deposits and deposit substitutes required to be held in the form of negotiable and transferable government securities—a buffer in case of a bank run or heavy withdrawals.

The BSP expects to mop up more than P200 billion in domestic liquidity or m3 to bring down the broad money supply growth to below 20 percent.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is the broadest measure of money and is used to estimate the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

The strong inflows of overseas Filipino workers' remittances, export earnings, and foreign direct and portfolio investments continue to drive the sustained growth in domestic liquidity.

GOV'T is exploring new markets for local fruits

PAL completes e-ticket coverage

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES SAID ON FRIDAY that it has completed the implementation of electronic ticketing for all the flights in its network, seven months ahead of the International Air Transport Association's Dec. 31 deadline for all airlines to adopt the system.

The airline association said full e-ticketing coverage worldwide will save the airline industry up to $3 billion per year.

IATA member-airlines process a total of 300 million paper tickets each year and each paper ticket costs up to $10 to process, while an e-ticket costs only $1.

As for PAL, it completed e-ticketing coverage for its 18 domestic stations on June 24, 2006. E-ticketing coverage for its 24 international outlets was completed on May 17, 2007.

This made PAL at par with most major international carriers, which use the technology extensively.

The major global distribution systems in the travel industry, including Abacus, Sabre, Galileo, Amadeus, Apollo, Inifini, Worldspan, Topas and Travelshop, have also been plugged into the airline's e-ticketing network, enabling them to issue PAL e-tickets to their customers.

"E-ticketing is a major step towards building a comprehensive electronic commerce system in PAL—a strategic investment that we expect will yield long-term benefits," PAL president Jaime J. Bautista said in a statement. *Riza Olchondra*

Paxys to borrow $35M to pay old debt, fund expansion plan

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

CALL CENTER OWNER PAXYS INC. IS planning to borrow $30-$35 million from foreign banks to refinance portion of its short-term loans and fund future expansion and working capital.

Paxys chair Tarcisio Medalla said the company was planning to replace an existing loan of $8 million with a less expensive borrowing.

Paxys chief finance officer Manuel Lozano said the company had received proposals from three banks to arrange the debt. He said the company was expected to sign a debt deal within the next three to six months.

In the meantime, Medalla said Paxys was planning to increase its call center seats to more than 7,000 by mid-July with the launch of a new 1,600-seat facility in Cubao. This will be Paxys' sixth call center building and, so far, its biggest single floor center. The facility was estimated to cost about $10 million.

Advanced Contact Solutions Inc. (ACS), Paxys' call center subsidiary, first started with 2,000 seats in 2003. As of end-2006, the company's capacity has grown to about 6,000 seats.

The company has now three facilities in Makati, one in Cabuyao, Laguna and the fifth was recently opened in Lipa, Batangas.

ACS Lipa is on the second floor of SM City Lipa, spanning 3,200 square meters in floor size. The Lipa facility has 640 seats with an additional 49 seats for operations supervisors and 39 seats for quality assurance.

"We remain positive about the future of the business process outsourcing industry because there is still so much unmet demand, untapped markets and room for growth for all players," Medalla told stockholders during a meeting late Friday.

The outsourcing business in the Philippines is estimated at $2.4 billion a year, still a far cry from India's $30-billion a year turnover. However, in his message to stockholders, Medalla said the local industry was expected to catch up with its rivals soon given the high growth in its market niches.

The Board of Investments estimates that contact center employees will grow to 506,000 by the year 2010, from about 179,000 as of end 2006.

NZ seen as potential big market for RP fruits

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE is set to tap New Zealand as another major market for fresh and processed Philippine fruits such as banana, mango, papaya and pineapples.

"Opening up more markets for our tropical fruit exports would help realize the department's goals of making the agriculture sector more profitable for its small stakeholders," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap in a statement.

Yap said that aside from promoting Philippine tropical fruits in New Zealand, he would also pursue cooperative activities on soil conservation to provide employment and training opportunities for Filipino farmers.

He said the department would also explore the possibility of implementing a dairy manpower exchange program with New Zealand and an investment venture for halal food processing.

In the meantime, the agriculture secretary said he was expecting exports of fresh mangoes to increase this year, especially since demand in New Zealand, alone, was expected to reach 255,500 cartons yearly.

The country's mango exports come from various parts of the country. Mango is exported to 48 countries, including Hong Kong and Japan, which absorb 89 percent of the country's total mango exports, Yap said.

He earlier said the DA would negotiate for the export of mangoes from Davao del Sur to the highly lucrative markets of Australia and the United States, following extensive studies that showed that mangoes from this area passed stringent phytosanitary tests conducted by foreign experts.

"These encouraging test results, which showed that Davao del Sur is free from mango pulp and seed weevils, could lead to an increase in exports of this tropical fruit by 15 percent yearly up to 2010," Yap said.

The opening of new markets will allow the country to raise its mango production to 2 million tons by 2020, he noted.

Peso now …

From page B1

like China.

At the very least, Neri said, Philippine exporters could find comfort in the declining inflation and interest rates.

"They are being helped by lower inflation and lower cost of money," he said. "We just have to help them in other costs of doing business—ports, containers, shipping, airlines, power."

He said the government's focus should be on lowering power costs, since these comprise a large chunk of businesses' expense.

If utilization of the recently established P280-million export promotion fund would prove to be efficient, the government could infuse more money to the fund, Neri said.

The long-awaited export fund seeks to shore up the battered export sector's global competitiveness under a strong peso regime.

The fund was put up earlier this year with financial contribution from various state agencies: Department of Trade and Industry (P100 million), Department of Budget and Management (P100 million), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (P50 million), National Economic and Development Authority, representing the national government as owner of the Industrial Guarantee and Loan Fund (P20 million).

When asked about the families of overseas Filipino workers, who are likewise adversely affected by the peso's strengthening, Neri said: "Well, they are not being taxed anyway, so that's their consolation."

"Also, OFW remittances are getting higher anyway," Neri said. "Remittances are increasing because there's an upgrade on the quality of jobs."

Business and economics experts from De La Salle University proposed in a study the taxation of remittances from OFWs and the use of proceeds to shore up the productivity of workers left behind.

"The possibility of increasing and internalizing the cost of international migration may be considered to reduce the economic ills it has generated … Such a move can arrest the possible hollowing effects on industries and mitigate the loss in international competition," according to the research, titled "The Economic Impacts of International Migration: A Case Study on the Philippines," written by Tereso Tullao, Michael Angelo Cortez and Edward See.

The study suggested that the same remittance income pouring into the country had nurtured dependence, contributed indirectly in the contraction of industries and developed a culture of migration among Filipinos.

Market seen ...

From page B1

curities president Francisco Liboro said.

Joseph Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc., said investors would be closely watching the Chinese and Hong Kong markets this week to determine their impact on global markets.

AB Capital Securities noted in its weekly report that traders took profits last week after former US Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan warned of a dramatic contraction in the Chinese stock market.

"This is a worrisome comment as the last 9-percent slump in the Shanghai market in late February sparked a global stock market sell-off," AB Capital Securities said. "China's run up is seen to be unsustainable, and there could be a dramatic contraction at some point. If he is right, China's rapidly rising stock market may eventually fall sharply, possibly taking with them the rest of the global equity market.

Last week, the benchmark index breached the 3,500 resistance level, reaching a record intra-day high of 3,517.13.

Low interest rates among other factors, have lured investors to keep their money in stocks. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Gov't seeks $57M in loan, grant

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING financial assistance worth $57 million or about P2.6 billion from the World Bank for the improvement of its capability to take care of the country's environment and natural resources.

The Department of Finance, the agency working on the approval of the request, said the government was specifically asking the World Bank for a $50-million loan and a $7-million grant.

"The main objective of the project, which will be financed by the World Bank fund, is to assist the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in improving its efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery," a DOF official in charge of the matter told reporters.

The DENR project has three components: Policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation; integrated ecosystem management, and environmental and natural resources management.

The first part covers the rationalization of 'administrative arrangements' in the DENR, enhancement of the agency's management information system, and the establishment of a procurement unit in the department.

The second part includes the rehabilitation of watersheds in priority areas and the implementation of programs that will raise awareness among local communities on habitat rehabilitation and restoration.

The last part covers the strengthening of the capacity of local government units in monitoring the management of integrated watershed through the establishment of needed facilities, and enhancing the DENR's capacity to oversee the implementation of environmental regulations.

The loan component worth $50 million, if approved by the World Bank, will form part of the national government's foreign borrowing via official development assistance (ODA) programmed for 2007.

For this year, the government has set a ceiling of $2.466 billion for its foreign borrowings, of which $1.466 billion should come in the form of ODAs and $1 billion in the form of a commercial borrowing through issuance of sovereign bonds.

The government has already raised the commercial component of the borrowings early this year through the sale of global bonds.

Government borrowings are used to finance projects and programs that cannot be accommodated due to insufficient revenue collection, and to pay off maturing obligations.

RP seeks slice of $188-B tourism pie

From page B1

lot from medical tourism with the services that we can offer, according to Tourism Secretary Ace Durano.

In the two years that his office has prioritized medical tourism, he said significant progress has been made in positioning the country as an attractive destination for people needing medical care at rates cheaper than those normally found elsewhere.

Despite his innate optimism, however, Durano acknowledges that significant challenges still need to be hurdled before the country's medical practitioners could draw in more dollars.

Wellness on the cheap

Medical tourism is not a new phenomenon.

Many local doctors have long engaged in the practice, with some having a regular stream of patients from the expatriate Filipino community, who fly in from abroad to avail of their services.

Coronary by-pass heart surgery, for example, would cost an average of $50,000 in the United States, while the same service in the Philippines could be performed for anywhere between $10,000 to $25,000, according to the Department of Health.

Similarly, Lasik eye surgery in the country would cost about $1,000 compared to an average of $3,000 in the US. Cosmetic surgery procedures like breast augmentation, meanwhile, averages around $2,000 when done locally compared to approximately $5,000 in the US.

Clearly, the cost benefits are there, Durano said, adding that the country already has a reputation abroad for providing quality service in optometry, dentistry and cosmetic surgery in specialized clinics.

A paper published by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies pointed out, however, that the country has so far failed to organize the practice into a cohesive industry. Because of this, countries like India, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and recently Indonesia, have overtaken the Philippines in the race for patients' dollars.

Durano attributed their success to the ability of their medical industries to land lucrative tie-ups with international insurance firms which often act as clearing houses for the medical treatment of policyholders.

These countries are quite ahead of us because of these institutional clients, he said. These insurance firms determine if medical services in any given country are eligible for [insurance] coverage.

Durano points out that, so far, most patients who visit the country to avail of medical services still pay out-of-pocket rather than have their treatments shouldered by health insurance because of the country's lack of accreditation with the larger insurers.

For the country to make it big in this game, the government, private hospitals and clinics, and medical practitioners would first have to prove their worth to foreign health insurance firms.

Uphill climb

Convincing these firms, however, will be an uphill climb given the state of the local medical industry.

A paper published by University of Asia and the Pacific professors Jovi Dacanay and Maria Cherry Lyn Rodolfo pointed out that poor medical infrastructure, a lack of modern medical equipment, research and development, and information technology services are the main reasons why the country is unable to catch up with its neighbors.

To its credit, the medical industry has responded to the challenge, starting with major hospitals which have recently upgraded their facilities and services in a bid to ride the wave of medical tourism.

THE PHILIPPINES has become an attractive destination for people needing medical care at cheaper rates.

These include St. Luke's Hospital, Asian Hospital, Makati Medical Center and the New Medical City, all of which have been accredited by local and international groups.

Of late, however, a new and more fundamental threat has emerged to the country's bid to become a hub for medical tourism.

How can we hope to attract medical tourists when we are losing all our best doctors and nurses for better jobs abroad? said Asian Institute of Management professor Emmanuel Leyco.

Unless structural weaknesses in the broader healthcare system are fixed, the country can kiss medical tourism goodbye, he said.

(To be continued)

INFOTECH

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Text messaging is still king in Asia

By Abigail L. Ho

MOBILE PHONE OPERAtors in the country and the region have been rushing to be the first to introduce new services to market.

Consumers, however, do not seem to be snapping these up at the same pace, still favoring the most basic service there is—text messaging.

According to a GSM Association (GSMA) report, consumers in Asia still prefer text messaging over any other mobile service, followed by mobile email and multimedia messaging service (MMS).

MOST mobile phone users prefer the SMS feature over sending e-mail

Overall, mobile subscribers from Asia, North America and Europe feel the same way.

"When asked which mobile data services they prefer, the respondents ranked text messaging first, followed by email and MMS ranked third," a GSMA statement said.

Most mobile consumers in Asia, North America and Europe feel that short messaging service (SMS), more popularly known as text messaging, is indispensable to them.

More than 40 percent feel the same way about MMS, while 38 percent see mobile email in the same light.

Regional differences were still noted, however, in that North American respondents were more partial to mobile email, ahead of text messaging and mobile instant messaging.

European mobile subscribers registered results similar to Asian respondents, ranking SMS first, mobile email second and MMS third.

Based on the survey results, mobile consumers the world over still prefer the more basic services over the newer, more advanced ones.

Of the 14 services included in the survey, SMS or MMS alert claimed the fourth spot, instant messaging took fifth place, web browsing and searching ranked sixth, financial transactions placed ninth, and downloading content occupied the tenth spot.

Most basic phone models can handle these services.

Services requiring more high-end and specialized handsets were relegated to the bottom half of the rankings.

These included location-based services, mobile radio, mobile TV, video calling and video sharing.

Mobile gambling has also yet to take off in the three markets included in the survey, which ended up occupying the bottom rung.

The survey commissioned by GSMA, which was conducted by independent research firm Circle Research, involved 3,061 respondents from 15 countries in the three markets.

The survey aims to "enable players in the rapidly evolving mobile services market to address key strategic and tactical marketing challenges."

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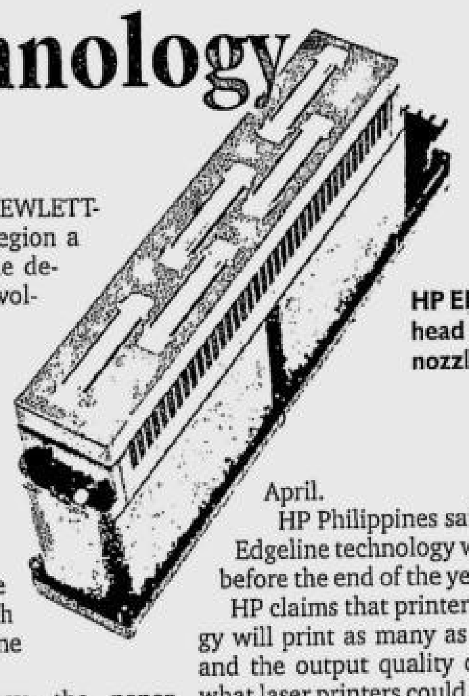
HP redefines inkjet printing with new technology

By Charles E. Buban

PRINTER MANUFACTURER HEWLETT-Packard has brought to the region a new ink-based printing engine designed exclusively for high-volume production.

The technology called HP Edgeline took center stage during the recent Hewlett-Packard PrintWatch Live! in Singapore.



HP EDGELINE'S print head has over 10,000 nozzles

HP claims that Edgeline is different because the print heads span the entire length of the carriage and distribute ink across the paper's width rapidly and precisely in one pass.

"With Edgeline technology, the paper moves, not the print heads, resulting in faster print speeds and excellent print quality. This first-of-its-kind design is more economical to build as well as less prone to breakdowns since there are fewer moving parts," explained John Solomon, HP Asia Pacific and Japan VP for supplies.

Ease of use

"This sophisticated print head design has over 10,000 separate nozzles with about one-fifth on 'stand-by' and ready to kick in if any nozzle gets clogged. This enables the printer to print in one or two passes, much faster that what today's print heads could accomplish," he added.

With the ease of use that this technology is expected to bring, he said that printers with Edgeline technology could result in improved productivity and operating cost will be cut by as much as 30 percent.

First unveiled in late 2006 in San Francisco, the Edgeline technology was finally introduced in the region (in Beijing, China) last April.

HP Philippines said that printers with Edgeline technology will be available here before the end of the year.

HP claims that printers with this technology will print as many as 71 pages a minute, and the output quality can be compared to what laser printers could deliver.

Such a print quality is also made possible by pairing the Edgeline technology with HP's range of Vivera inks that use a new bonding agent to speed up the drying process.

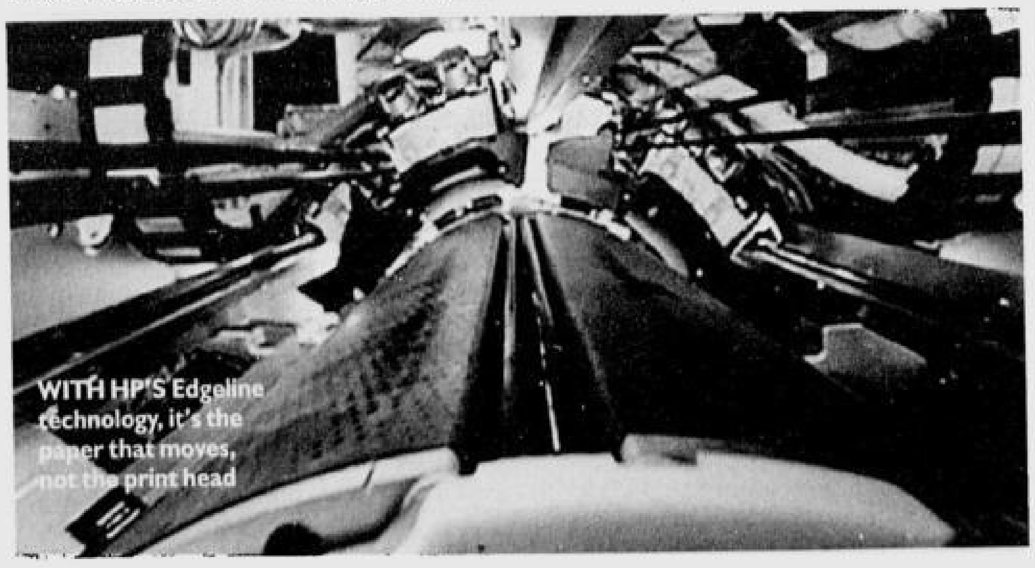
With this new type of ink, HP claims, users will be able to address problems associated with color inkjet printing, such as wet pages.

Solomon said the Edgeline technology opens the door to innovative printing solutions for businesses with high-volume printing requirements.

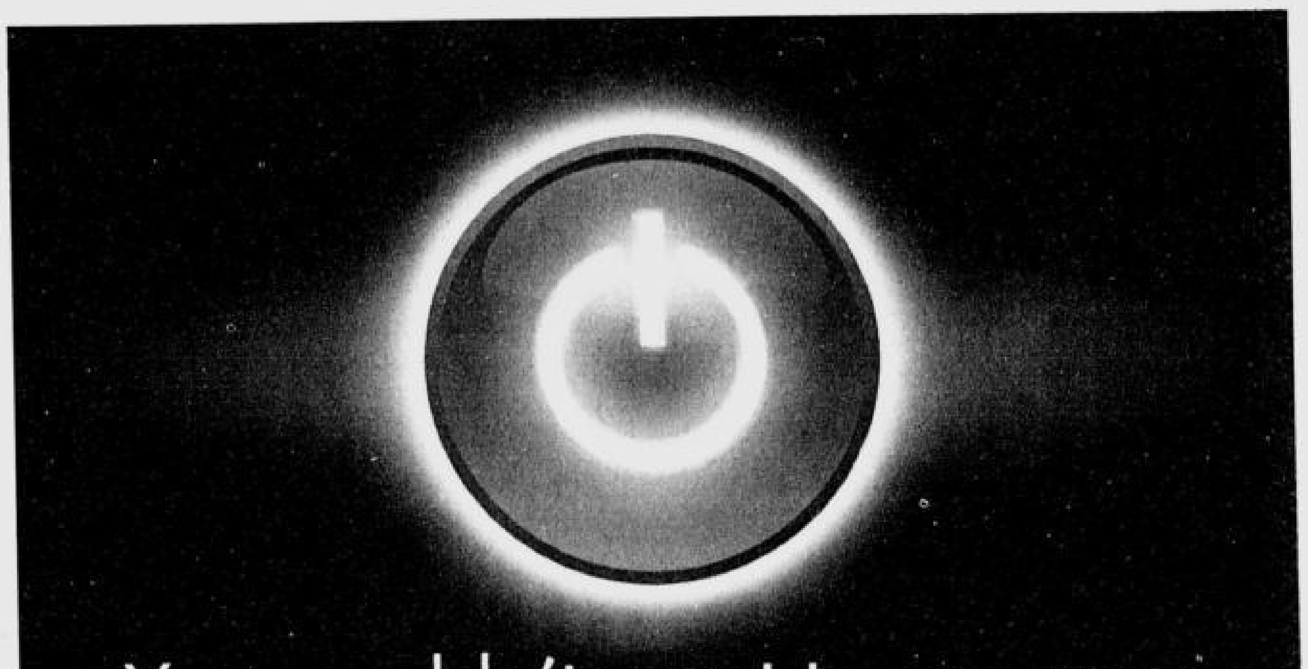
These include those involved in retail photo printing (photo kiosk, photo mini lab and creative output), industrial printing (light production) and those in the office using all-in-one printers.

Combining these areas of growth, Solomon said Edgeline technology would expand HP's market to about $30 billion (around P1.38 trillion).

It would also allow the company to build its portfolio and complement its current laser and industrial printing businesses.



WITH HP'S Edgeline technology, it's the paper that moves, not the print head



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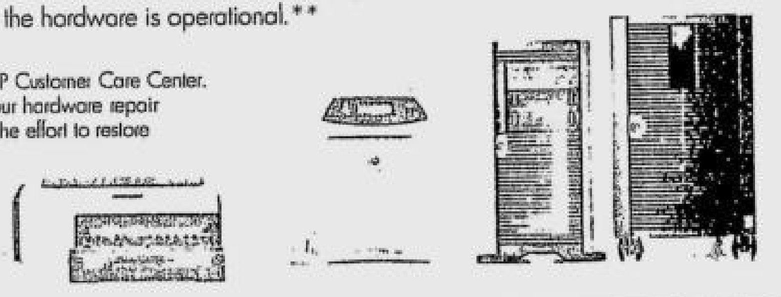

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Global trade talks on goods seen blocked

GENEVA—MAJOR GLOBAL trade talks on cutting goods tariffs were reported blocked on Friday, heightening gloom among negotiators over prospects for a successful outcome to the World Trade Organization's Doha Round.

Trade sources and diplomats said talks over the past few days on the goods dossier, known by the acronym Nama, had shown no movement toward closing the gap between developed and developing countries.

The sources quoted a clearly frustrated chair of the talks, Canada's WTO ambassador Don Stephenson, as saying he no longer wanted to hear countries in the talks simply repeating their positions when a new session starts on June 4.

"I already know them (the positions). They haunt me," he told negotiators at a meeting to wrap up the week's talks, according to the sources.

Stephenson, like the chair of talks in the other—and equally problematic—cornerstone area of agriculture, is due to present a formal text of a final agreement in July, when ministers are due to meet to try to rescue the round.

"Things are looking rather gloomy all over at this stage," said one source close to the negotiations in the Round, launched in Doha, Qatar, at the end of 2001 and originally set to wrap up by the end of 2005.

The aim of the round, involving the WTO's 150 member states, is to inject new vigor into the global economy by lowering trade barriers and enabling poorer countries to trade their way out of poverty and underdevelopment.

Farm talks, where differences seem even more entrenched than in goods, are due to resume this Wednesday. But in recent days, differences between developed and developing countries, and between rich trading powers, appear to have heightened.

Earlier this week China told the WTO in a formal letter that the richer states—a clear reference to primarily the United States and the European Union—must offer "effective cuts" in farm subsidies, the central issue bedeviling the talks.

But on Friday, France's new farm minister, Christine Lagarde, said she would not agree to compromise the interests of her country's farmers to secure a global trade deal.

Although EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson negotiates for the entire grouping, any agreement he reaches has to be approved by all 28 member countries, among whom France—where farmers enjoy strong political clout—has a powerful voice. *Reuters*

Wall St. to strike cautious pose

SPECIALIST Matthew Cebulski, right, and his clerk look at screens from their post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Wall Street rose smartly in a quiet session Friday as investors adjusted positions ahead of a long holiday weekend and tried to determine whether a lackluster week presaged a departure from the market's months-long run-up or merely a temporary pause. AP

NEW YORK—WALL STREET has pulled back from a run toward new records and appears to be hesitating amid indications that the US economy is showing fresh vigor—perhaps too much for those looking for interest rate cuts.

Over the past week, the broad-market Standard & Poor's 500 came tantalizingly close to breaking its record set during the tech boom of 2000 but fell short as investors consolidated the hefty gains of recent weeks.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average of 30 blue chips lost 0.36 percent on the week to end at 13,507.28 ahead of the three-day Memorial Day weekend, retreating from its series of record highs.

The broad-market S&P 500 shed 0.46 percent for the week to 1,515.73, as it hovered near its all-time high of 1,527.46.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite dipped 0.05 percent to close the week at 2,557.19.

Good news on the economy proved to be mixed for Wall Street. Analysts said that some investors had been counting on sluggish growth to spur the Federal Reserve to cut rates, which could then jump-start the economy and profits.

The market was surprised by a rise in new home sales, although that was tempered by lower sales of existing homes. A jump in durable goods orders suggested manufacturing is pulling out of its lethargy.

But strong data is seen by some as rekindling fears of a rate hike and prompting forward-looking investors to cash out of the market.

"If we have a combination of strong economic numbers and higher inflation, that might just reverse hopes of an interest rate cut, and people might begin to concentrate on a possible rate hike," said Peter Cardillo, analyst at Avalon Partners.

"I expect most of the data to point to a recovery in economic activity in the second half and slightly higher inflation but nothing that would trigger a Fed move either way."

The Federal Reserve has held its base rate at 5.25 percent since June. Some analysts see a rate cut to help spark a sluggish economy even though the Fed argues that inflation is the biggest risk ahead.

One key report for the market this week will be the revised report on first-quarter gross domestic product (GDP).

The report is expected to show the economy stalled to a near-crawl with annualized growth of just 0.7 percent.

More significant may be Friday's report on unemployment and payroll growth, seen as a reliable indicator of economic momentum. Analysts see the report showing a gain of 140,000 jobs in April after a weak 88,000 in March.

Other analysts say the market is still benefiting from the flurry of activity in mergers, acquisitions and private-equity deals.

Bond prices fell as market participants positioned more for a rate hike instead of a cut by the Fed and stronger economic conditions.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury bond climbed to 4.861 percent from 4.804 percent a week earlier while the 30-year bond yield climbed to 5.008 percent from 4.957 percent. Bond yields and prices move in opposite directions. *AFP*

China, US fail to solve trade disagreements

WASHINGTON—HIGH-LEVEL economic talks between China and the United States last week failed to ease trade rifts between the two economic giants, risking rising tensions ahead of the race for the US presidency.

Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi and a delegation of ministers left the US capital on Friday, after days of talks that made modest advances but were overshadowed by a lack of concrete progress on the key issue of China's currency.

What US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson had billed as a dialogue to address long-term issues gave way to short-term political jockeying as Washington pushed for rapid currency reform and China pushed back.

Wu made it clear that China would stick to reforming its exchange rate regime at its own pace.

That riled China's critics in Congress, who renewed the threat of punitive legislation. They also were unimpressed by commitments Beijing made to further opening of its financial services and aviation sectors.

A number of US politicians are preparing legislation that would penalize imports from China to counter what they say is a currency that is unfairly undervalued by as much as 40 percent.

William Overholt, director of the Center for Asia Pacific Policy at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California, said both sides were at fault for sticking to untenable positions.

For one, the argument that the value of the yuan was responsible for the large US trade deficit with China—which hit $233 billion last year—was "just wrong," Overholt said.

"On the other side, the Chinese stalling on letting American beef into their market on the grounds that it's unsafe ... just makes no sense at all," he said, referring to one of the issues on which the Bush administration pressed Beijing this week.

China stopped importing US beef when mad cow disease surfaced in the United States in 2003.

Overholt said protectionist sentiment would only get worse as the 2008 presidential election neared.

Susan Shirk, a former US State Department official responsible for relations with China, said the fact that Beijing had not offered any major initiatives in the talks would not sit well in Washington.

Smaller disputes, such as worries about toxins in Chinese ingredients making their way into pet food and other products, also were swaying the public mood, said Shirk, now a professor at the University of California, San Diego.

China's own political cycle could put it on a collision course with the US Congress on the yuan, as a Communist Party Congress later this year will give Chinese officials an incentive to avoid any drastic reforms on the yuan, some analysts say.

Nicholas Lardy, a China expert at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, said China needed to let the yuan appreciate significantly.

But China was caught in a bind, Lardy said. A large one-off revaluation could hurt many exporting firms, while a faster pace of appreciation could invite large inflows of speculative capital. *Reuters*

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02

A MAN pulls his cart past a billboard advertising commercial discounts in Jakarta. Southeast Asia's largest economy grew 6 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, down from 6.1 percent in the previous quarter, while analysts warned that Indonesia needed to improve its investment climate and reduce its reliance on commodity exports to achieve its forecast of 6.3-percent economic growth this year. AFP

Wal-Mart CEO accused of ethics breach

LOS ANGELES—A FIRED WAL-MART Stores Inc. marketing executive has accused the retailer's chief executive of violating its ethics policy by accepting discounts on yachts, diamonds and personal gifts from vendors and others eager to work with the company.

Wal-Mart and former marketing communications chief Julie Roehm have both filed suits over her December dismissal after less than a year at the world's largest retailer.

Roehm sued for breach of contract. In a March countersuit, Wal-Mart accused her of accepting gifts from an advertising agency that was later chosen to handle the retailer's ad account.

It also accused her of misusing company travel funds on business trips with a subordinate with whom, it said, she was romantically involved.

In papers filed on Thursday in Detroit federal court, Roehm said it was Wal-Mart's top brass who violated the company's strict ethics rules.

Chief Executive H. Lee Scott had received "preferential prices" on yachts and "a large pink diamond for his wife" through his relationship with businessman Irwin Jacobs, she said.

One of Jacobs' companies, Jacobs Trading Co., has the exclusive right to buy unsold Wal-Mart merchandise.

Roehm also accused a group of executives, including the company's executive vice president of marketing, John Fleming, of violating the ethics policy by accepting $300 tickets and back stage passes to an Eagles rock concert during a meeting with vendors in Barcelona, Spain.

Later in the day, Wal-Mart said the allegations of impropriety involving its CEO were untrue.

Jacobs was not immediately available for comment.

Also in Thursday's filing, Roehm denied accusations that she used a review of advertising agencies to pursue a job at one of those agencies. *Reuters*

If world has one interest rate, it looks too low, experts say

LONDON—THE WORLD ECONOMY is booming, financial markets are supercharged, energy prices are sky-high and credit growth is accelerating. If that spells inflation to you, global monetary policy looks way too loose.

The problem is there is no single world interest rate to readjust accordingly and no one institution to do it. As a result, there's growing anxiety about whether any nascent world inflation threat can or will be met head on.

World business, financing and investment are ever more global, but a broad array of central banks sets the existing patchwork of central bank borrowing costs, using differing regional and analytical prisms.

And in the absence of concerted action, global investable cash and its funding is behaving like an inflatable toy. Squeeze it at one end and the air just goes somewhere else.

"Increasingly—in theory at least—there is no national interest rate. There is a global interest rate because money is so liquid," said James Carrick, strategist at UK fund manager Legal & General Investment Management.

Access to Japan's near-zero interest rates has for the past five years been the clearest example of cheap funding in one part of the world flooding many global markets even as the US Federal Reserve and European Central Bank squeezed.

Yen-based demand for high-yielding New Zealand bonds—for example—has meant long-term borrowing costs there have barely budged despite the Reserve Bank of New Zealand hiking rates by some 3 percentage points over the past three years.

Yet, both nominal and real—or inflation-adjusted—interest rates across the Group of Seven industrialized countries have risen steadily over the past two years.

The average G7 interest rate is up a full percentage point to 3.85 percent since the end of 2005.

Jim O'Neill, chief global economist at Goldman Sachs, points out that real G7 rates are still below their 25-year average, although the gap has now narrowed to within 75 basis points.

"You must remember actual inflation remains pretty low and real rates in the G7 are rising steadily."

On the other hand, Jean-Philippe Cotis, chief economist at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, indicated on Thursday monetary policy needed a further squeeze.

"There is a risk that in many places the balance between aggregate demand and supply has already shifted towards overheating," Cotis said.

Carrick at L&G argues that super-cheap corporate finance in the likes of China and India is dulling the effects of tightening in the major developed economies.

The racing emerging economies of Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Latin America are driving world growth to its highest in a generation.

The International Monetary Fund expects global expansion of almost 5 percent again this year and 7.5 percent in the emerging world.

The sort of investment-led boom seen in China, for example, looks less of a mystery given Chinese firms' ability to raise local capital at some 7 to 8 percent and invest it in an economy growing at nominal rates of about 14 percent.

One impact has been that the domestic investment boom draws in billions of foreign dollars to chase juicy returns.

The People's Bank of China then uses those dollars to keep its yuan stable, and reinvests a lion's share in US bonds—keeping long-term US borrowing costs lower than Fed tightening would have warranted previously.

More directly, blistering investment growth in China, the Middle East and Russia generates massive demand for capital goods and firms in countries like Germany excel in making these.

The net stimulus to the German economy and labor markets has, as a result, been significant fuel to the recent robust euro zone expansion even as the ECB hikes and US slows.

So if there is no official world interest rate, is there a good proxy? Long-term market interest rates are critical.

Despite rate hikes by the Fed and ECB since 2004, 10-year US and euro government borrowing is no more expensive now than before the Fed began tightening three years ago.

The picture is even looser elsewhere. *Reuters*

Tuna firms want gov't to define fishing grounds

Industry fears RP will lose vital access

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—TUNA PRODUCERS here have asked the national government to immediately enact a law clearly defining the country's 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Fishing tycoon Domingo Teng, former president of the Socsksargen (South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani-General Santos) Federation of Fishing and Allied Services Inc. (SFFASI), said the declaration was necessary to protect the country's fishing grounds.

Teng said that the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), a body created by the United Nations (UN) to regulate the catching of tuna and other marine species in the western and central Pacific areas, may declare it a free zone or part of the international fishing grounds if the area would be left defined.

Teng and other fishing operators recently met with Sen. Manuel Roxas II here to discuss options and other concerns affecting the country's multibillion tuna industry.

The two major concerns raised by the fishing sector with Roxas were the immediate passage of a law delineating the country's EEZ and the forging of fishing and other bilateral agreements with several countries, such as the United States, European Union, Indonesia, Malaysia, Palau and Papua New Guinea.

During the meeting held at Sydney Hotel here, Roxas said these concerns required the action of both Congress and Malacañang.

Roxas pledged to do his best to help the tuna industry, which provides jobs to more than 100,000 residents here.

He said the country's access to rich fishing grounds was vital to the sustainability and survival of the growing tuna industry.

Teng said the group was also asking the government to lobby for a free trade agreement with the United States in the wake of threats from other tuna producing countries such as Thailand.

Thailand, which has become the country's biggest competitor, has recently entered into a free trade agreement with the United States.

"Other option is to ask the US, through the national government, to allow general system of preference (GSP), which gives special treatment to our tuna producers or equal tariff rate vis-à-vis our biggest competitor," he said.

Baguio moves to keep convention center

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment has reopened negotiations to prevent the Government Service Insurance System from repossessing the Baguio Convention Center.

The city government offered to pay P35 million to maintain goodwill with the GSIS.

Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr., who won the mayoral race here, said he would pursue the advance payments but he would also ask the city government to draft a better payment contract with GSIS, which sold the facility to the city for P250 million.

Baguio initiated the purchase of the convention center, the site of the 1978 world chess match between grandmasters Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi, years after GSIS had first offered it to the SM group of companies.

The GSIS agreed to mortgage the convention center against Baguio's share from the lease rentals of Camp John Hay (CJH) to forge the sale, but the CJH developer had suspended payments over a legal dispute with the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA).

The BCDA released an initial P50 million in 2004, but it refused to proceed with the payments.

The agency said it was contracted only to use payments from the developer, the Fil Estate-owned Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco).

The city government was declared in default as early as January, and was given until May 11 to pay a balance of P117.689 million.

Bautista said there were signs the BCDA was using the unresolved sale of the convention facility as leverage in an attempt to reduce its debts to Baguio.

The BCDA has disowned a set of conditions that the agency agreed to uphold in 1994 when it secured the city government's endorsement to develop Camp John Hay, a former United States rest and recreation facility.

A provision assured the city government a 25-percent share of the rent, although the BCDA law grants host communities only 2 percent, Bautista said.

The so-called 19 conditions, embodied in City Resolution 362-1994, were the bases for the environmental compliance certificate that was issued to the BCDA and CJHDevco when they launched a tourism estate inside John Hay.

These questions could be cleared up by redesigning the payment scheme for the convention center, Bautista said.

The purchase contract relies on two independent but related agreements, which oblige the BCDA to shoulder the convention center's purchase using the Camp John Hay rent.

Bautista said the BCDA advised him last week that it had wrapped up talks with CJHDevco, and was ready to resume its rent payments.

But Bautista doubted that the BCDA would push through with its commitments. "They have been bluffing all this time," he said. *Vincent Cabreza with a report from Donna Demetillo, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

RP shipments to Japan up

From page B14

the Senate but business groups have endorsed it, saying this was "within the country's legal and economic framework."

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry had said existing laws provide the legal framework to address concerns on the entry of harmful substances that are included in the list of goods that can be traded under the Jpepa.

Environmentalists have decried the inclusion of wastes in the Jpepa but trade officials said it was merely a technicality that needed to be done, simply the removal of useless tariffs.

Despite the removal of duties, prohibited wastes cannot enter the country since they are banned under laws, trade officials said.

But lawyer Jeremy I. Gatdula, a professor of trade law at the Ateneo de Manila University, said a side agreement related to toxic wastes does not solve the deeper, more substantive problems of the Jpepa.

"(Jpepa provides) safeguard protection for our local industries, complicated rules of origin that could encourage smuggling, and additional obligations identified as Singapore issues which we rejected at the WTO level," Gatdula said.

Further, he said the need for the Jpepa was questionable since the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Japan are working on a free trade agreement.

In 2006, Philippine exports grew 2.5 percent to $7.96 billion, having maintained a 1.4-percent share of Japan's exports, which reached $579.29 billion.

Last year, two-way trade of goods rang up to $16.98 billion, with Japan chalking up a surplus of $1.05 billion.

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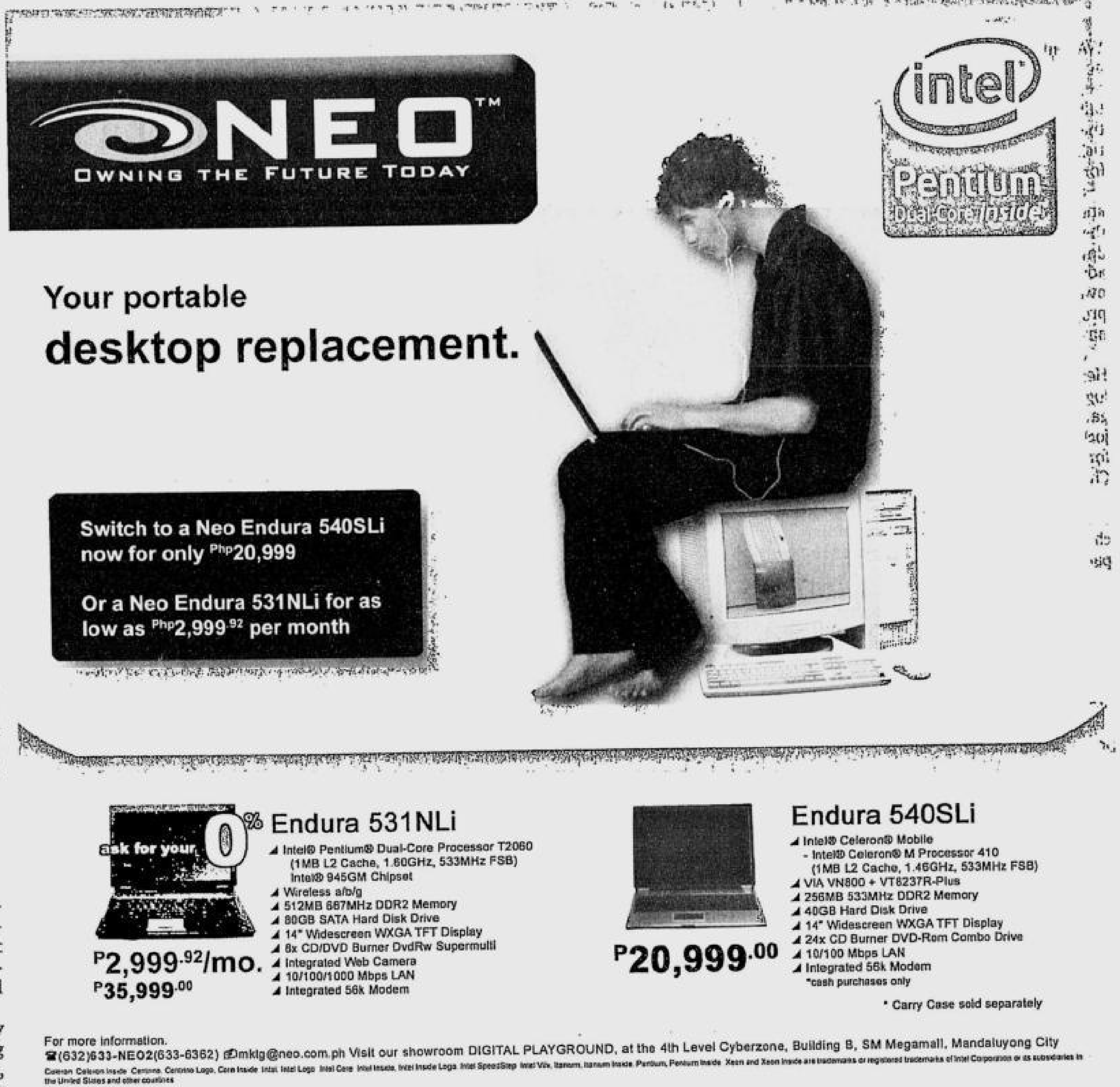
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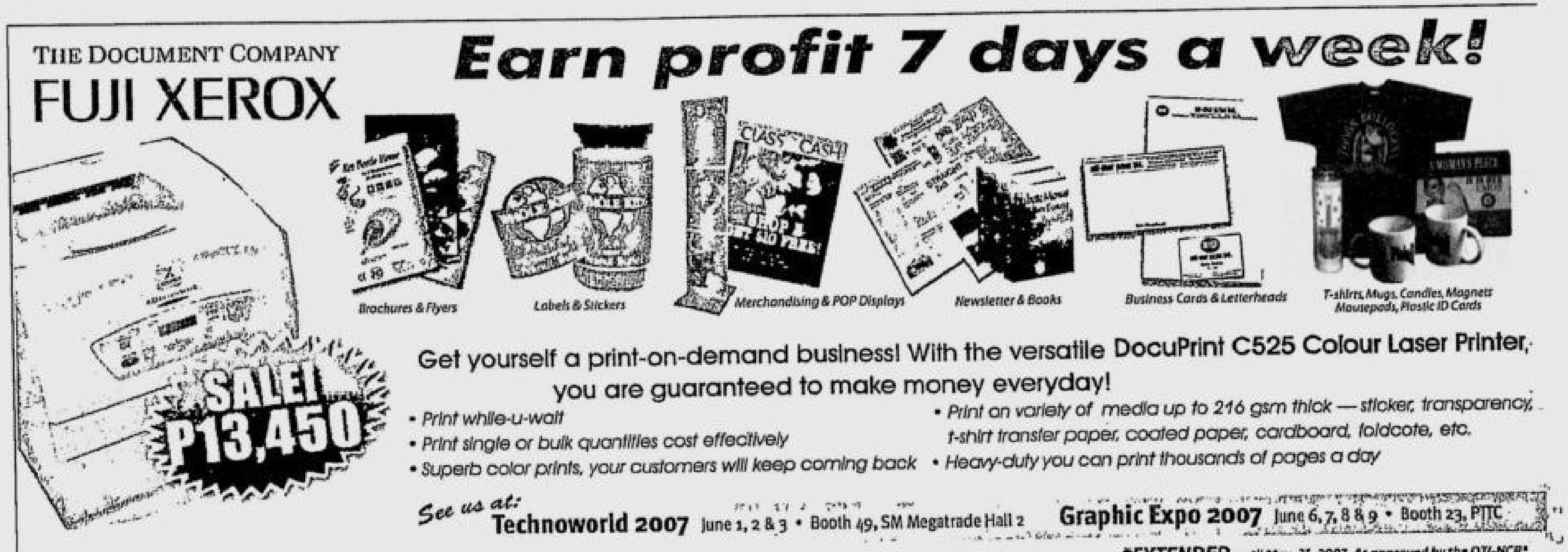
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BUSINESS Monday

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po-Espino

The chips are coming

Magnetic stripe cards are on the way out

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CARDS using magnetic stripes still rule the market.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CHIPS ARE DOING WHAT MAGnetic stripes did to paper—they are making the other technology obsolete.

So far, over 40 countries have successfully migrated from the oft-used magnetic stripe cards to chip cards that store much more data and are capable of doing more than just record purchase transactions.

The Philippines, however, is not as fast at adopting the new technology being pushed by payment specialists Europay, MasterCard and Visa, mainly because of the cost.

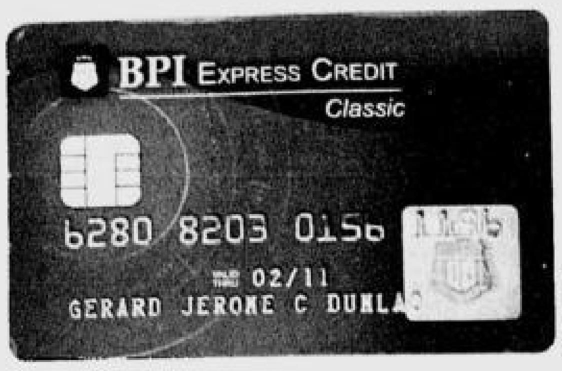
'Smart' card

Put simply, a smart card is a plastic card embedded with a microchip, similar to those found in cellular phones.

Compared with magnetic stripes, the smart cards can offer new and a wider variety payment options and services, and more importantly, greater identity security.

Given these features, experts expect that it will only be a matter of time before the Philippines joins the ranks of other countries with at least over one million chip cards in operation, even if it costs about five times more to produce a chip card compared to a card with a magnetic stripe.

One of the first companies in the Philippines to adopt a microchip card is the Rustan's group of companies with its Frequent Shoppers Plus Card.



BPI is the first bank to issue chip cards.

The loyalty card entitles members to discounts and prizes corresponding to their accumulated purchases from the department store and affiliated companies.

Rustan's store manager Reena M. Arnaldo says in an interview that the FSP card was first launched in 1998, and its purpose was to strengthen customer relations and give back to clients more services for their money.

"FSP likewise helped create a stronger database for us, so we are also able to continuously connect with our customers—updating them on the many events, promotions, programs that we hold in our stores," Arnaldo says.

She adds that since Rustan's was the first to use the microchip technology, its customers have been able to use their cards in affiliate companies, not just in Rustan's.

"This is so to have our loyal customers earn exciting perks while enjoying a bigger and wider range of world-class merchandise," she says.

The latest evolution to its offering is the Rustan's Black FSP for the top-tier clients.

Black FSP holders are given exclusive access to the Black FSP Lounge in Makati City, equipped with wifi, shower and dressing rooms, and a plasma television.

Black FSP holders can even avail themselves of limousine service to take them to the store, free valet and parking services.

One of the latest to adopt the smart card technology is the Bank of the Philippine Islands, one of the country's leading banking and financial institutions, which completed migrating all of its cards from magnetic stripes to chip cards early this year.

Bank joins club

Ma. Cristina Go, BPI head of card marketing, banking and sales, says BPI made the switch after 20 years primarily to give its customers better security.

Smart cards provide protection against fraud because these reduce losses from "skimming," or the copying of information contained in a magnetic stripe, and at the same time, they can contain more information, such as shopping habits and frequent transactions.

Go adds that the adoption of smart cards was also driven by the need to give card holders better value for their cards.

"There are many programs that can only run on a chip card, and we are about to launch programs that will run exclusively on the chip cards, such as a better loyalty and rewards program," Go explains.

BPI is so far the only bank that has moved to smart cards compliant with the EMV global standard for chip-based credit and debit transactions, and the foundation for emerging payments, such as no-contact and mobile payment solutions.

Go says that the evolution has been slow because primarily of the expense, not only because the cards themselves are expensive, but also because migration will mean the purchase of new merchant terminals that will read the chip cards.

"But sooner or later, more and more companies will use the chip cards, in the same way that people moved from the manual transactions to magnetic stripes," she says, "it will just be a matter of time."

Visa said in a statement that it has not yet issued any chip cards in the Philippines, and is still stuck with magnetic cards.

But, it said it was in continuous discussions with member financial institutions to explain the global standards, guidelines, best practices and global development of EMV chip cards in the hope that Visa chip cards would soon be issued.

Visa said that the adoption of smart cards is being driven by competition to create more exciting and customized products like multi-application cards.

"Smart cards are more cost effective because they can be reissued less frequently and telecommunications costs are further lowered since many chip-enabled transactions can be authorized safely online," Visa said.

Cheaper telecommunications

"Merchants also benefit because of reduced cost of telecommunications, accelerated transaction time and point-of-sale efficiencies. Member-banks further benefit because of reduced costs and protection against fraud; new market opportunities in terms of new merchant segments and stronger consumer and merchant relationships," Visa added.

The smart card technology in the Philippines, however, has been generally limited to so-called single purpose chips, unlike in other countries where the same loyalty card issued by retail stores could also double as credit cards or even identification cards.

These single-purpose chips also cover the SIM cards inside mobile phones, the debit cards issued by the Bank of the Philippine Islands and the phone cards issued by the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which are disposed once the set amount is consumed.

The smart card technology is already used for mobile where the phone can also be used to surf the Internet and store pictures and tones, but has not really spread to other potential areas such as in banking and even retail.

Visa data showed that three new markets in Asia Pacific have reached one million EMV chip cards, highlighting the ongoing progress of migration to chip cards in the region.

In the December quarter of 2006, Australia, Hong Kong and Thailand have joined Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia in the one million chip card club from Visa's member banks.

It may not bee too long before the Philippines joins the list.

Using SMS for different corporate needs

ERICK KALUGDAN, TOGETHER WITH some friends, realized early on that the rapid growth of mobile phone users in the country was associated with text messaging what with 200 million text messages being sent out everyday in the Philippines.

Thus, they decided to establish GiveMe Unlimited Inc. in 2001, an enterprise and wireless solutions provider specifically specializing in SMS (short message service or text messaging).

Deviating from telecommunication companies involved in consumer retailing, GiveMe Unlimited wanted to target corporations and organizations from micro industries to large corporations, and provide such clients with convenient, efficient, and cost-effective SMS services for their customers and staff.

The company launched the InfoTXT Messaging Platform, enabling one to send and receive high-volume SMS messages using a computer, as well as access valuable information (such as contact information or product details) anytime, anywhere, simply by using an SMS-capable cell phone. The InfoTXT Messaging Platform is a 3-time Grand Prize winner of the Best Mobile Application in the eServices Philippines 2003, 2004 and 2005 trade fair.

Three variants of InfoTXT are available to choose from, InfoTXT Basic, InfoTXT Advanced and InfoTXT WebDB, each used for sending, receiving, and retrieving information within a company and with their customers. InfoTXT can also be customized to accommodate special modules, such as Text Raffle, Text Survey or Text Polls.

Some companies are also seeing the benefits of implementing their own SMS services. Chowking acquired GiveMe Unlimited's award-winning InfoTXT Messaging Platform for their SMS-based Customer Feedback System with an Electronic Raffle feature. Samsung, on the other hand, uses an SMS-based Merchandise Inventory Monitoring System and Marketing. Eagleridge Golf and Country Club's InfoTXT Messaging Platform provides a fully automated Golf Tee Time Reservation System for their members via SMS. Wyeth Philippines acquired the InfoTXT Messaging Platform to remind customers of their medication through SMS.

KALUGDAN

A partial list of GiveMe Unlimited's clients also include Negros Navigation, Tagaytay Highlands Golf and Country Club, Zuellig Philippines, the Australian Embassy, Maersk Filipinas, Alaska, PNP, Philippine Navy.

Kalugdan believes that in the future, InfoTXT will be a standard business tool, similar to fax machines. He also states that "A company with no InfoTXT will be left behind by their competitors who provide better and more convenient value-added customer service to their customers."

(FROM LEFT) Megalink chair and Cocobank president Jose L. Querubin, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr., Megalink president and Development Bank of the Philippines president Reynaldo G. David, Philippine National Bank president Omar Byron Mier during the anniversary of Megalink where it announced the expansion of its services to small banks and even nonbank financial institutions.

Toward a more vibrant SME sector

MAPping THE FUTURE

Benigno N. Ricafort

THE GENEVA-BASED INTERNATIONal Trade Center Unctad/WTO published in 1997 a study, entitled "The SME and the Global Market Place ... An Analysis of Competitiveness Constraints."

The study under the framework of the International Competitiveness Program for SMEs (ICPS) categorically stated that: "The role that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play in developing and transition economies is undisputed and well recognized, contributing significantly to employment. They are, in fact, engines of growth."

The study on SMEs was in the context of the recent trends toward globalization, which was viewed as both an opportunity and a threat to an economy. The SME sector, in particular, was regarded as highly vulnerable because most were family owned, generally under-capitalized and lacked business acumen and plans.

The definition of what an SME is varies among the developed, developing and under-developed economies, but all definitions cover the issue on competitiveness constraints, although in varying intensity.

The Philippine SME situation

Through the years, there have been several government-led initiatives to assist Philippine SMEs. However, President Macapagal-Arroyo is to be congratulated for having emphasized the value of sustainability and continuity, which to her idea can be realized via a strong partnership between the government and the private sector.

It is noteworthy to mention that Ms Arroyo is regarded as the only Philippine president with formal education and training in Economics, and would thus fully grasp the significance of the SME sector as a primary source of domestic employment opportunities, particularly in the rural countryside.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos deserves to be appreciated as well, for it was during his term that the Philippines hosted the Apec Summit.

Records showed his consistency in advocating support for SMEs as institutionalized in the concept that the Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) members be tasked with SME concerns.

On a micro level, the SMED Council of Pampanga took the challenge of partnering with government and initiated in 2002 a series of pilot activities involving the mandated line agencies under the Magna Carta for SMEs and the local governments.

The vision is to assist in minimizing the adverse impact of globalization and liberalization on the vulnerable SME sector, and thus help in the efforts to save jobs.

The SMED Council of Pampanga, together with its partner agencies in government and the private sector—the 47-year-old Metro Angeles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rotarians, and other trade and industry associations based in the province—proceeded with the formulation of a project that will involve the participation of the academe and top graduating students majoring in the disciplines needed in business.

Details are as follows:

Project Title: Capacity Building and Competitiveness Enhancement Program for Pampanga SMEs.

Project objectives:

"The Capacity Building and Competitiveness Enhancement Program for Pampanga SMEs was started in 2002, with the slogan "SAVE JOBS" by providing technical and financing assistance particularly to the large number of rural enterprises employing 10 to 15 workers. The advent of competition from both internal and external forces was perceived as real threats to this sector that may lead to business closures and loss of employment.

"Likewise, there are growth opportunities that could be available, given the capacity and technical resources of the SME sector, which may be limited due to the nature of family ownership.

Project participants:

Participating school: Holy Angel University

Participating NGOs: Metro Angeles Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MACCI),

Various Pampanga rotary clubs and rotarians,

Pampanga Philexport, Chamber of Furniture

Industries, government and private banks

Participating GOs: DTI, Neda, Tesda, DSWD, DOST, LGU

The SMED Council and its mandated partners pursued the pilot project to its successful conclusion that involved some 200 students and 50 entrepreneurs from 2002 to end of 2006, with the SMED Council as the lead group.

A memorandum of agreement was entered into with the Holy Angel University, under which the latter allowed the use of the university facilities and the nomination of the 10 top graduating students majoring in the disciplines needed by business:

The students in accounting, management, HRD, IT, marketing and industrial engineering were given on-the-job training compliance credits.

Their expected output was the formulation of a business plan for their assigned SME, to be selected by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Accomplishments–results

1. There were about five batches of 50 students that took part in the project, a total 250 graduating students majoring in the business disciplines (accounting, management, marketing, HRD-IT and industrial engineering) were mobilized and more than 40 small and medium enterprises engaged in manufacturing were served.

2. The project qualified for a grant of P50,000 from the Neda-IGLF Grant Program, with the additional mandate to replicate the project in other areas and monitor the status of the SMEs that participated and to an extent possible, a survey on the career path of the students that participated in the project.

3. In the process of planning and negotiations are several areas for the replication of the project: Northern Luzon (Pangasinan and Tarlac), Souther Luzon—Batangas and Bicol, Visayas—(Cebu and Bacolod), and the province of Rizal. Target date will be the school year 2007-2008.

Challenges and plans

School year 2007-2008 will be a banner year with the following activities on line:

1. Project replication—An audio visual material is under process, which will be distributed to interested groups through the provincial SMED councils, chambers of commerce and industries, trade associations, rotary organizations and the Philippine Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (PACSB).

2. Monitoring of SMEs that participated in the project.

3. Monitoring of the students that participated in the project i.e. their present status/career path.

The strategy is to develop and put in place a package program under the institution of a GO-NGO partnership in capacity building and competitiveness enhancement activities.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is EVP of the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Foundation (CCPF) and member of the Philippine Apec Business Advisory Council (Abac) since 1996. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION
REGION 6, BONIFACIO DRIVE, ILOILO CITY
☎ (033) 336-11-70
Fax Nos.: (033) 336-38-62 (033) 337-65-97

Contract Ref. No. NIAR6-RRENIS-AKRIS-CW05-07
Name of Contract: Rehabilitation of Aklan RIS
Location: Aklan, Region VI

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **National Irrigation Administration, Region VI,** through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder Contract:

Name of Contract : **Rehabilitation of Aklan River Irrigation System (RIS)**
Location : Aklan, Region VI
Brief Description : 1. Construction of various Bench Flume (2.5 km)

Approved Budget For the Contract (ABC): **Php10,156,010.94**
Contract Duration : **120 Calendar Days**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	*Schedule*		
	Time	DATE	VENUE
1. Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI), and Issuance of Eligibility Forms		May 28 to June 4, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2. Deadline; receipt of Eligibility Requirements		June 4, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
3. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check		June 7, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4. Issuance of Bid Documents		June 7-18, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
5. Pre-bid Conference	10:15 A.M.	June 18, 2007	Aklan RIS, Banga, Aklan
6. Receipt and Opening of Bids	10:15 A.M.	June 29, 2007	Aklan RIS, Banga, Aklan

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the National Irrigation Regional Office 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City, upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00 to the NIA Region VI Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 3,000.00 to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The National Irrigation Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved:

(Sgd.) **OLIVER A. CERVANTES**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Needed Immediately

GENERAL MANAGER

for
FIRST LAGUNA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (FLECO)
Lumban, Laguna

Qualifications:

- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Laguna

Starting Salary: P30,000.00

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of application form is on 11 June 2007.

(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
Administrator

Republic of the Philippines
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT—METRO MANILA
Acacia Lane Welfareville Compound, Mandaluyong City
Tel. No. 535-4542 / Fax No. 535-4595
E-mail: chd_mm@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Procurement of Various Goods

The Center for Health Development-Metro Manila (CHD-MM), through the GOP funds – CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of the following goods being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The CHD-MM now invites sealed Bids, from eligible Bidders for the procurement of various goods. Delivery of the GOODS is required by third quarter of CY 2007. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

IAEB No.	GOODS	ABC	Bid Document Price
2007-001	Security Services (a) CHD-MM (b) SLRWH	 2,361,600.00 1,082,400.00	P 8,000.00
2007-002	Hotel Services (Venue of Training)	321,600.00	3,000.00
2007-003	Medical Supplies (a) Syringes with needle (b) vaccine carrier	 300,000.00 100,000.00	 2,000.00 500.00
2007-004	Gasoline & Lubricant	800,000.00	3,000.00

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualifications stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Supply Section (c/o Ms. Zenaida B. Reyes at tel. no. 535-4542 and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 9:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee on May 28-June 8, 2007. The method of payment will be in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The CHD-MM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 22, 2007 (9:00 a.m.) at the CHD-MM Amphitheatre, Acacia Lane Welfareville Compound, Mandaluyong City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the CHD-MM Amphitheatre, Acacia Lane, Welfareville Compound, Mandaluyong City on date stated below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Surety Bond and in the amount of equivalent not exceeding to two and a half percent (2.5%) of the total ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be at the CHD-MM Amphitheatre, Acacia Lane, Welfareville Compound, Barangay Addition Hills Mandaluyong City on time and date stated below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative who choose to attend at the address below.

IAEB No.	Submission of Bids & Eligibility Requirements (Time & Date)	Bid Opening (Time & Date)
2007-001	9:00 am July 4, 2007	9:15 am July 4, 2007
2007-002	1:30 pm July 4, 2007	1:45 pm July 4, 2007
2007-003	9:00 am July 5, 2007	9:15 am July 5, 2007
2007-004	1:30 pm July 5, 2007	1:45 pm July 5, 2007

The CHD-MM reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

CENTER FOR HEALTH GOVERNMENT-METRO MANILA
DR. CARMEN G. GERVACIO, MPH
Acacia Lane, Welfareville Compound, Mandaluyong City
Tel. No. (632) 535-45-42
Email address chd_mm@yahoo.com
Fax No. (632) 535-45-42

(Sgd.) CARMEN G. GERVACIO, MD, MPH
Chairman
Bids & Awards Commitee

(PDI – May 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Needed Immediately

GENERAL MANAGER

for
Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO)
San Carlos City, Pangasinan

Qualifications:

- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Pangasinan

Starting Salary: P35,000.00

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of application form is on June 13, 2007.

(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
Administrator

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	**One lot - Supply, installation, commissioning and test runs of four (4) units Counting Machine (Double Head Pin & Blade) per BSP Technical Specifications**
Approved Budget for the Contract	**US$201,373.36**
Delivery Period to Port of Loading	**Within sixteen (16) weeks after opening of Letter of Credit**

Prospective bidders should have undertaken similar contract within the last ten (10) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	28 May - 07 June 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	03 June 2007; 10:30 AM
3. Opening of Bids	26 June 2007; 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A R.A. No .9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P5,000.00** to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI – May 28, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MARY BABY L. CARDENAS

has been convicted by the Regional Trial Court, Branch 16, Zamboanga City in the case entitled ***"People of the Philippines vs. Mary Baby L. Cardenas"*** and docketed as Criminal Case Nos. 22245, 22246 and 22247.

A reward will be given for any information that will lead to her arrest. For any information as to her whereabouts, please call the:

Legal and Collection Department
ALLIED BANKING CORPORATION
Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue,
Makati City
at Tel. Nos. (632) 816-0902; (632) 810-2379
(632) 816-3311 to 99 local 544

Any information provided shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

(PDI–May 25, 28 & June 3, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

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We rejoice and give thanks to our Lord for the gift of this man who lived an exemplary life in dedicated service to his God, his country and his people, and whose being an ideal, true Filipino will always be an inspiration to us all.

May we ask the readers to say a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul in God's everlasting light and peace.

AUGUSTO BELTRAN REYES

"Ogie"

Joined our Creator on the 25th day of May 2007, at the age of 47, afer living a life full of joy, love and peace he truly shared.

His remains lie at the Loyola Memorial Chapels and Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be tomorrow, Tuesday, 29th of May 2007, at the Immaculate Conception, Cubao, Quezon City., after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

The bereaved family **Ofelia R. Reyes**, and son **John Joseph "Josh" Reyes**, together with his sisters and brother, relatives and friends request prayers for the repose of his soul.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

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Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

BUSINESS

RP shipments to Japan rise

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE VALUE OF SHIPMENTS TO Japan went up 11.9 percent to $2.1 billion in the first quarter as Tokyo and Manila push an economic partnership agreement despite concerns about toxic wastes coming into the country through the deal.

According to the Japan External Trade Organization, preliminary data from the Ministry of Finance showed that in the first three months, shipments from the Philippines accounted for 1.5 percent of Japan's total imports of some $144.6 billion.

In that quarter, Japan sent to the Philippines goods worth $2.26 billion or 1.4 of Japan's $166.4-billion merchandise exports.

Japan enjoyed a trade surplus of $158.86 million, but this meant a 16.9-percent decline from the previous year's level.

Last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed to sign a side agreement where Tokyo promises not to send toxic wastes to the Philippines through the Jpepa.

The treaty awaits action from

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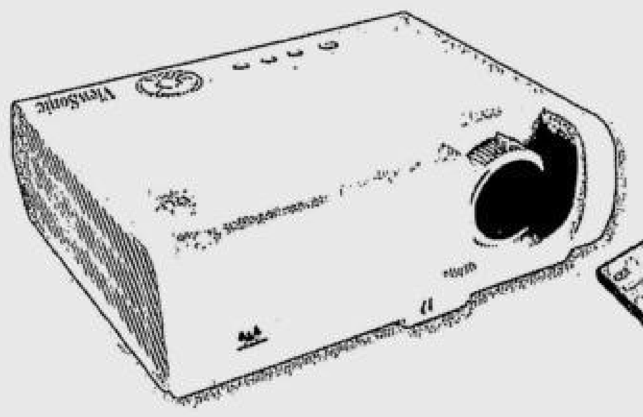

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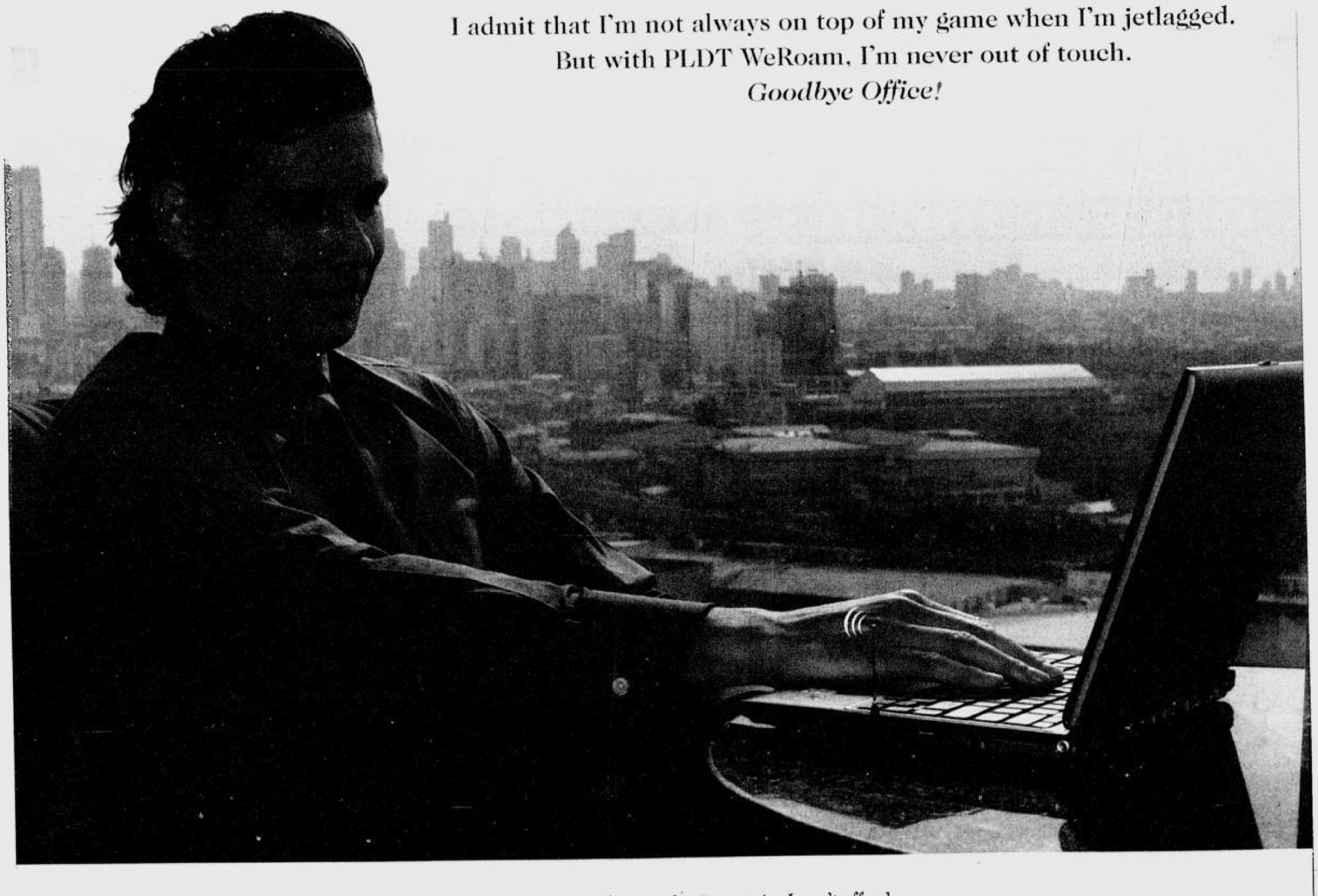

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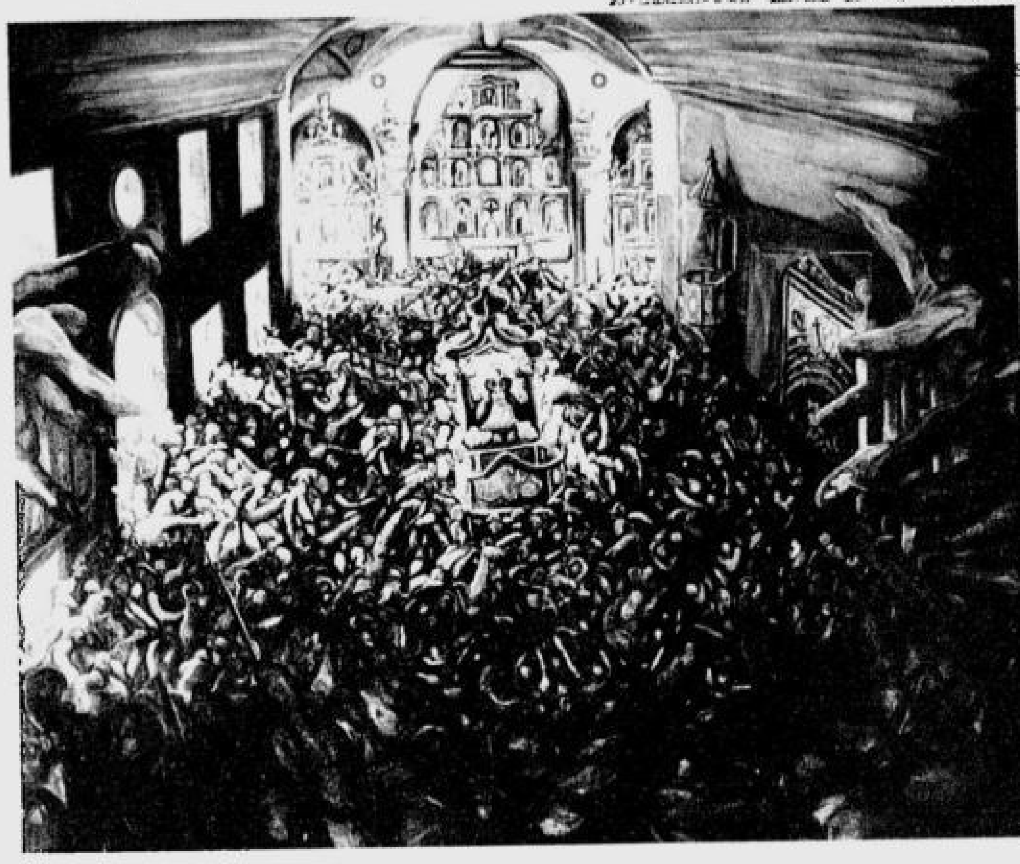
MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◎ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◎ WEDNESDAY

TYPICAL "Turumba" canvas by Dalena



I was called a 'natural' because of my art skills. Which was a polite way of calling me 'ineducable.' Until Danny Dalena came along

PAINTER Dalena drinks to Nick Joaquin during the state necrological services for the National Artist in 2004.

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A short history of my art

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

NOT THAT ANYBODY CARES TO know, but I began sketching from the age of 8-10 years old, then never again until I was old.

My childhood pals, Vihing and Tita, who lived in the *entresuelo* of our Quiapo house, loved to draw. Every afternoon, their mother dispatched the girls with a jute sack to Tong Teong Son Printing Press to collect paper remnants (*pinagtabasan*) of calendars, receipts and columnar pads. It was for kindling their wood stove. But the three of us would first salvage the big remnants—some almost whole sheets—for drawing, to which we devoted many hours.

One day, the Nakpils who lived in the big house across invited me to join a children's art class. It was given by a "maestro" who came once a week to their house. The "maestro" put a wine bottle on the table for us to copy. I could never make both sides look the same.

The next week, the model was a wine glass! Truly exasperated, I returned to Aling Nena's kitchen table where I happily reverted to drawing faces and people, none of them symmetrical, with Vihing and Tita.

Soon we needed to evacuate to Malabon. There my cousins were more interested in reading romance novels than drawing. Twelve-year-old Azon was determined to translate Emily Loring into Tagalog and I became her (lousy) younger collaborator.

But you go back to an old love, and one summer, when I was in my late 60s, Araceli "Cheloy" Dans generously offered to teach painting to our senior group, Women Plus. Everyone was so good at still life—Sylvia Ventura, Luning Ira and Letty Constantino's stand-in, her grandchild Ninel.

They drew shells and twigs and leaves and flowers that you could almost smell. I drew angels with purple wings who wore girdles and bras. I often slunk home without showing them to Cheloy.

I continued to draw everything freaky that I wanted but never told anyone. But I did want to improve, so I enrolled in the summer workshop of Fernando Sena.

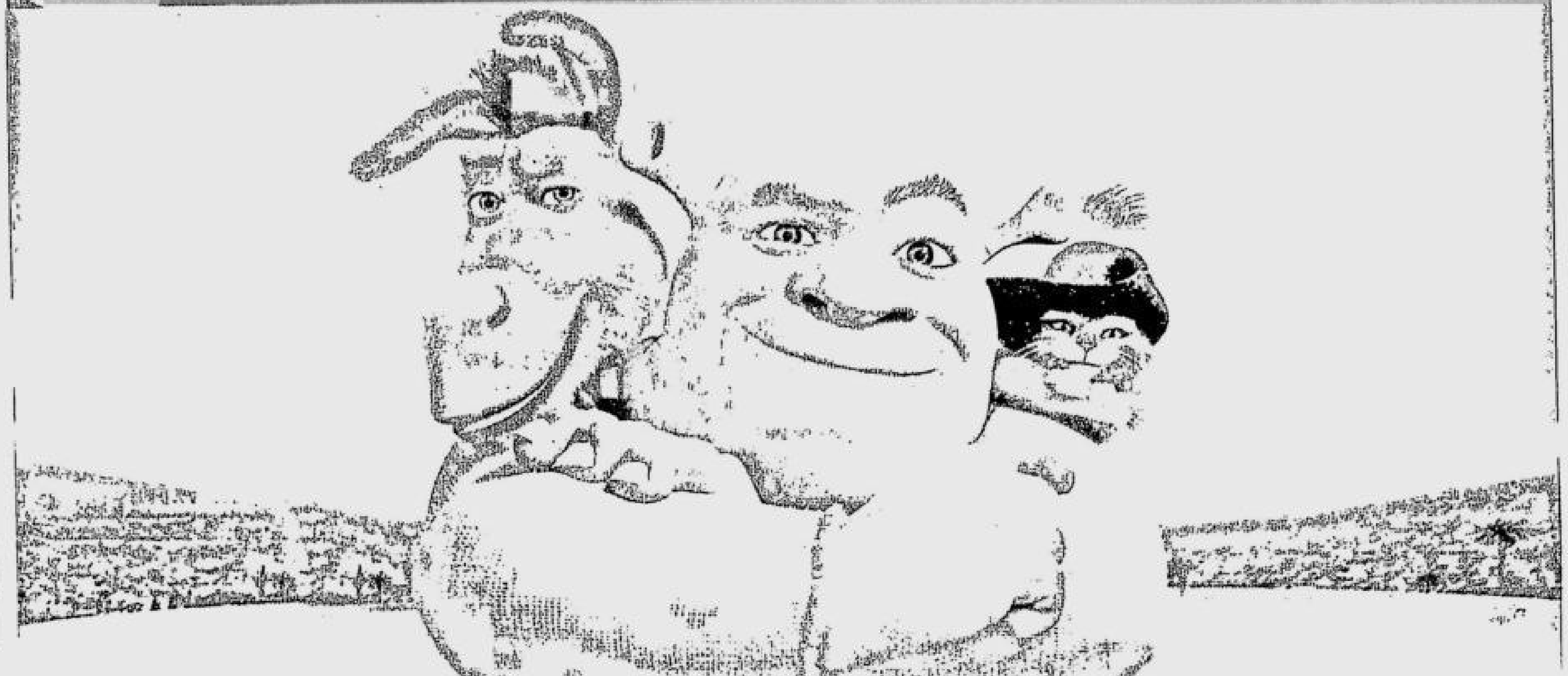
He thought my art was fine. Inevitably he had to lecture on the technical side of the color wheel and how to tackle the light falling on an object. I couldn't follow and dropped out after three lessons. There were other lectures from other fine teachers but I just couldn't absorb theory.

It was getting pretty clear that I could not learn anything that came through the logical, orderly, sequential left lobe of my brain. I was 90-percent right brain, pure inspiration and instinct.

In school, when we were assigned to make an outline for a story, I would write the whole story first in order to derive the outline out of it. Neither could I learn the prescribed steps of ballroom dancing—but set me free and I could create a dance! This made me feel like a moron.

A SHORT/ C2

"I want someone tall, dark and handheld!"



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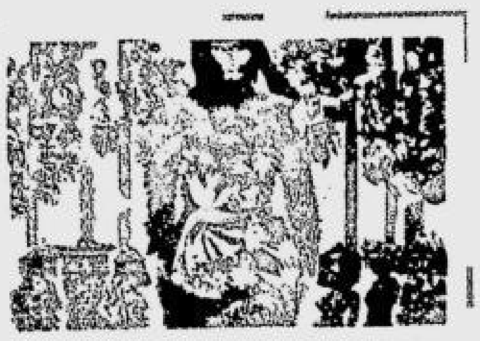
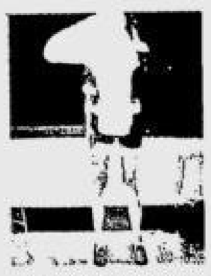


"SCENT of a Woman," by Herzon de la Rosa

VISUAL ARTS

Herzon in Singapore

Herzon de la Rosa is one of the artists featured in the Singapore Arts Festival. In "Colors and Impressions," he teams up with three prolific artists—Rollie Yusi, Fred Ramirez and Manuel Baldemor—at Sanjin Galleries, 42 Jalan Merah Saga, WorkLoft Singapore, on June 7-21.



"BLACKBOARD," by Yasmin Sison

Tuesday Group anniversary show

The Tuesday Group of artists is holding its 12th-anniversary exhibit until June 3 at Art Center, 4/L, SM Megamall.

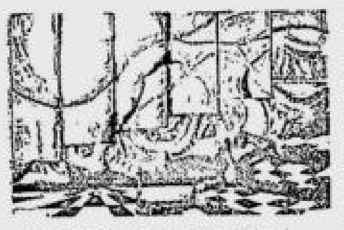
Sison, Kiri Dalena at Mag:net

Yasmin Sison's "The Punky Brewster Session," an exhibit of oil-on-canvas works in sizes 6x4 ft and 3x4 ft, is running until June 11 at Mag:net Gallery Katipunan, 335 Agcor Bldg., Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, QC. Call 9293191. Meanwhile, "Found Figures," an exhibition of new sculptures by Kiri Lluch Dalena, is running until June 12 at Mag:net Gallery ABS, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN Compound, QC. The figures have references to human-rights issues although the artist said infusing the free-formed sculptures with political content was not premeditated. Call 4100995 or visit www.magnet.com.ph

KIRI Dalena at work

Bonsai exhibit postponed

The Philippine Bonsai Society Inc. has announced that its Open Exhibition and Competition 2007, scheduled June 1-10 at the SM Mall of Asia, is indefinitely postponed. Call 0918-7268818 or 0918-9914200.



"ARAW o Gabi," by Raul Roco Jr.

Pinoy artists in Seattle

Five local artists are featured in Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival 2007 at the Seattle Center, Seattle, Washington. The exhibit "5 Strokes: Pinoy Expressions" opens on June 8 and features paintings by Grandier Bella, Jane de la Paz, Jes Evangelista, Norlito Meimban and Raul Roco Jr. The show runs through June. Call 3744878 or 4152130.

Sergent at Astra

French artist Frabrice Sergent, whose previous exhibit "One-Word Stories" dealt with about exploration, self-comprehension and communication, tackles more of the same in "One-Word Stories 2," which aims to share perceptions and associate illusions created by a picture. The exhibit runs until June 7 at 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Makati.

Antipolo arts fest

The Antipolo Arts Festival, until June 30 in Pinto Art Gallery, 1 Sierra Madre St., Grand Heights, Antipolo, features outdoor film screening, painting exhibits, terra-cotta sculpture installations and a contemporary stoneware. Call 6971015 or e-mail silangan.foundation@ gmail.com.

Donation to Lopez

Oriental ceramics researcher and author Cynthia Ongpin-Valdes recently bequeathed the 1922 watercolor "Estudio de Cabeza," by Fabian de la Rosa to the Lopez Memorial Museum. The museum, at G/F, Benpres Bldg., Exchange Rd. cor. Meralco Ave., 1600 Pasig, houses paintings by 19th- and 20th-century Filipino artists such as Juan Luna and Felix Hidalgo, and contemporary art and designs. Call 6359545 or e-mail pezseum@skyinet.net.

Compiled by Madelaine D. Cabrera

WRITER-RESEARCHER Cynthia Ongpin-Valdes (third from left) with Lopez Memorial Museum trustees: museum director Mercedes Vargas, Lopez Group chair Oscar M. Lopez, Connie R. Lopez and Margot Fragante

---

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto Villalon

Touring people around 'ugly' Manila as a patriotic act

I CAN'T CHANGE THE WAY MANILA looks, but I can change the way you look at Manila," is the signature statement Carlos Celdran ends all of his tours with.

Manila is the place I love to hate, but not Carlos. He loves it. Because he does, he gets us to change the way we look at Manila as he tours us around it, mixing fact with irreverent fancy in his commentary on Intramuros or other Manila tourist non-destinations, like the Cultural Center Complex, Escolta and the banks of the Pasig, or Binondo and Chinatown, places that we don't consider as tourist destinations because of their lack of known "attractions."

CARLOS Celdran leads tourists on a walking tour of Manila.

It isn't that we have a lack of attractions: Manila itself is the main attraction, disfigured as it appears to the uninitiated majority, which is most of us guilty citizens who have lived in this city for generations. We may think our city is a thorny place to live in, difficult to comprehend, and best to forget, but Carlos doesn't think so.

He navigates us around with ease through his favorite parts of the city, combing through layers of grime while pointing out things of history, beauty and interest in places that we normally pay no attention to. He makes the ordinary extraordinary.

To appreciate Manila, he teaches us to look beyond the ordinary. We learn to dig around, to be urban archaeologists, and to keep on digging until uncovering unexpected inner city finds that prove Manila—despite its badly disfigured physique—is, indeed, an extraordinary city like no other. That experience rearranges the Manileño mindset that pigeonholed Manila as a wasteland.

The tribe of people who find Manila extraordinary is increasing. Ivan ManDy is now on the scene. He shares his passion for Manila's Chinoy heritage by walking people through Binondo, the Chinese cemetery, and the badly tarnished, once-patrician district of San Miguel.

Ivan "woks" clients through Chinatown, weaving in and out of the more outstanding food sources in the area for a taste of Chinese specialties unknown to non-Chinese and not available anywhere else in the city.

Carlos' or Ivan's discovery tours make converts out of their clients to the unsung, unseen wonders of Manila.

Ivan the obsessed

Another Ivan (Henares) has an obsession with the Philippines that led to his mission to experience as much as he can of his country. He hit the road a few years ago and is still at it.

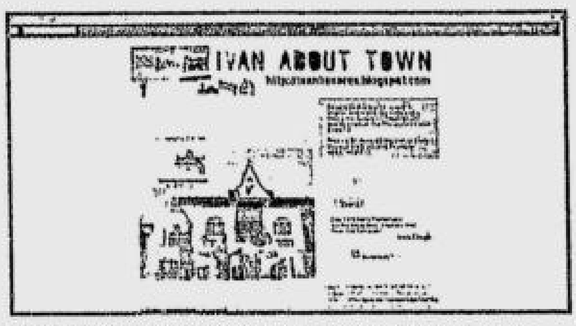
Ivan, intensely passionate about Philippine heritage, blogs his adventures thoroughly, tells you where he goes, how he gets there, what he finds, and his thoughts about his discoveries. He cannot repress the wonder he encounters with each new place he goes to.

Island Caravan gets you to most of those places. It organizes adventure tours to discovery destinations in the country—Batanes, the Rice Terraces, Samar, Romblon, Bohol, southern Luzon—and constantly adds new places to go to.

Youth Tourism Response Philippines (Youthtrip) is a relatively new nongovernment organization that aims to provide exposure to Philippine culture, history, and an awareness in all things Philippine.

The youth movement encourages and promotes domestic tourism and budget travel as means for Filipinos to experience and learn about culture, people and places.

Youthtrip is composed of professionals, teachers, travelers, artists, writers and others who have banded together by a common love: the Philippines and nation-building.



HERITAGE enthusiast Ivan Henares' travel blog

MY OWN wanderings around the country have led to memorable surprises like Alex Kafe in Argao, Cebu, where Alex shows off places to experience in his hometown as he serves great home-cooked food.

The tour story really begins with Carlos, the big daddy of the alternative tour guides, who made the breakthrough that everyday heritage was interesting and worth a good look. He, the two Ivans, Youthtrip and Island Caravan are among the fast-growing cult changing the way we look at our landscape, heritage and culture.

It is impossible not to be taken by their engaging, positive energy that makes their fellow Pinoys see something new, interesting and beautiful in this grand country of ours.

Most of all, their unabashed patriotism is exemplary. The Philippines is at the center of each of their worlds, as it should be with all of us. So contagious is the positive image they project of their country and of the fun they are having while discovering the Philippines.

"If we do nothing else, I think, we should define where the fun is in being Pinoy and communicate that," wrote heritage enthusiast Ollie Lucas.

That is what Carlos, the Ivans, Clare, and Island Caravan are having the fun of their lives doing. If only more Pinoys could be like them.

Heritage watch

I first noticed late last year, in October if I am not mistaken, that the electronic board announcing flight schedules at the departure area of the Philippine Airlines Centennial Terminal was not working. It was temporarily replaced by a makeshift whiteboard mounted on rollers where flight announcements were hard to read, but it was better than nothing.

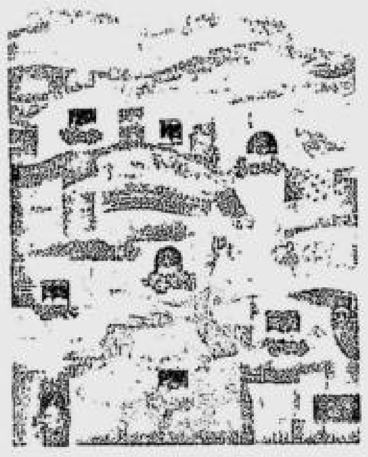
On the day I took a flight from that terminal last week, the whiteboard had been rolled away, totally gone from view. Everyone had to do a lot of useless walking to find his assigned check-in counter.

The current year is now entering its sixth month. The overhead board is still very dead. I guess it takes a long time to repair electronic boards. But why is it that similar boards in other airports around the world, usually larger and more complicated models than the one installed at our little Centennial Terminal, work all the time?

Carlos Celdran tours are listed at www.celdrantours.blogspot.com; visit Ivan ManDy's blog at www.oldmanilawalks.com; e-mail Island Caravan at info@islandcaravan.com; visit Ivan Henares' "Ivan About Town" blog at www.ivanhenares.blogspot.com; and visit Youthtrip at www.youthtrip.org

E-mail the author at pride.place @gmail.com

Baldemor's 'Windows' in Singapore



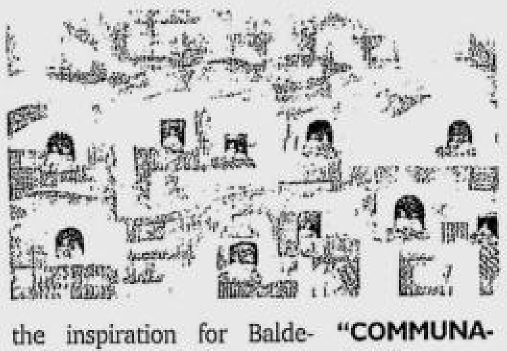
"THE BROWN Race"

THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY in Singapore is organizing a full program of cultural activities for the entire month of June in celebration of the 109th anniversary of Philippine Independence.

The program will include "Philippine Art Trek," which will feature several prominent Filipino artists exhibiting in various venues around the island nation of Singapore.

The embassy, headed by Ambassador Belen Anota, said it will showcase the very best from Filipino artists in order to bring a greater awareness and appreciation of Philippine art in Singapore.

The highlist of "Art Trek" is the exhibit featuring the works of renowned artist Manuel D. Baldemor at the 446-sqm Artrium of the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (Mica). The show will open on June 1.



"COMMUNALITY"

From 911 rainbow-hued timber windows and shutters of the Mica building comes the inspiration for Baldemor's newest exhibit.

"'Windows' will feature 100 paintings based on the artist's journey of discovery around the global village.

"My life's journey itself is one long quest for one window after another," Baldemor said.

"My paintings became my language of diplomacy, a key of color and forms that opens the actual windows to other worlds beyond my native country."

A short history of my art

From page C1

I always start a painting with no idea at all of what I want to do, how it will begin or end (a real no-no). I merely pick up the pencil and follow it where it wants to go. Out of the meandering lines, curves and swirls, an image invariably manifests. I recognize it.

I erase the extraneous lines and add those that I think are missing—connecting everything until, yes, it is exactly what I want. I guess it awakens something very deep inside and I never run out of subject matter.

No wonder I could see myself in the child who, asked what he was painting, answered "God."

"But have you ever seen God?" he was asked, and he answered "No." "How can you paint someone you've never seen?" they grilled him. "How does He look like?"

And the child replied: "Just wait. How can I tell you what He looks like when I haven't finished the painting yet?"

I did eventually learn what kind artist friends pumped into my ear by not listening to them and doing it my way, through endless trial and error.

"People like you," said my friend, the esteemed art professor of University of the Philippines, Bob Feleo, "we call naturals." Which is a nice way of labeling the ineducable.

Maestro

But as they say, when the student is reading, the teacher will appear, and he did.

He was very reluctant. "*Bakit ako?*" said the eminent painter Danny Dalena. "*Bobo ako.*" He said he was not a teacher.

I told him I needed only some critiqueing, not actual lessons. What could he do, I was already at his doorstep with a bag of *pancit*.

Danny Dalena has been my friend for many years. In fact, I was one of the girls who had become "one of the boys," who attended his yearly birthday party.

His quintessential macho gang included advertising man Erwin Castillo; sports writers Recah Trinidad and Al Mendoza; writers Greg Brillantes and Pete Lacaba; artists Chabet and Austria; director Carlitos Siguion Reyna; music collector Francis Serrano; and others who came and went.

Nick Joaquin was their ring leader. Always, they drank beer or scotch and sang their guts out.

Recah Trinidad, who was a lean and mean cook, prepared the *pulutan*—either deer or goat, *caldereta*-style or *adobo* or soup, sometimes just *kinilaw*. The lopped-off head would be on a platter for Danny to eat its brains.

The subject of Danny's earliest exhibit was toilets and, boy, you could smell the urine in the paintings and read the graffiti and even imagine yourself (eek!) in a *kubeta* with an overhead flush tank with a chain. "Each toilet has its own character," explained Danny, as if he were describing a church.

These were followed by his famous "Jai-Alai" and also counter-culture "Alibangbang" series. Alibangbang was one of a chain of cabarets—Sitsiritsit, Salaginto and Salagubang.

The girls in Alibangbang were mostly recycled from the other branches, so there were hoary ones but young dancers, too, who wore minis and boots. You could "table" them all. The owner's son provided him with a table in a corner of the dressing room to sketch on. That's how Danny's memorable raunchy "Alibangbang" series got done.

Danny loved his hometown, Pakil. He was there to dance in the Turumba procession and to be the "Hudas" on Good Friday. His hometown was where Danny painted his gentle nostalgic "Pakil" series. Later, he dabbled in the sketching of fat guys with sagging pectorals and buttocks, feebly exercising in a gym.

'Dalena-isms'

The first thing Danny told me was: "Don't enroll in art. It will ruin you." That's how I knew he was the right teacher for me.

"Colors have been given to us by God so we can use them all. But there will always be one color that you can't let go of and that you go back to again and again. It's your favorite, it becomes your trademark. Viewers can identify your work from the use of that color or its combination with others.

"On the other hand, there may be a color you don't care for or are afraid to use. Befriend it. Use it again and again until you're comfortable with it. It may even end up your favorite. One European master's signature color was blue because it was the cheapest paint available and the only one he could afford.

"If you're used to starting a painting with a certain color—say, green, begin with some other. It will take you away from your own well-beaten path.

"When an accidental drop of paint mars the painting you're working on, don't tear your hair in frustration. Just be creative. Incorporate the defect into the painting. On a flower it can be a bee, on a dog a flea, on the body a tattoo, on a landscape a tree. A shadow, created by a mistake in doing the background, can become some object, or a door or a ghost.

"The background? You can paint it before or after doing the figures. The color? Pick up one from the figures themselves. You see an artist starting off the background with a lot of water [for watercolor]. That's so you start with a color, especially one you're experimenting with, as very pale. That way you can backtrack, change you mind, and cover it still with another layer. But better to test unfamiliar background shades on scratch paper first.

"I don't like paintings when they're too meticulously planned. They're like a woman, all made up, with every hair in place. To me such a painting is ugly. Alibangbang was so beautiful with its peeling paint and disrepair. When it was remodeled and repainted it lost its charm. I like paintings that are natural.

"Spend time browsing through art books even if you're not buying them, preferably paintings in the same medium as yours. Look at paintings whose subject matter you can relate to. That should make you curious to figure out how that certain line, that shape, or that shade was created.

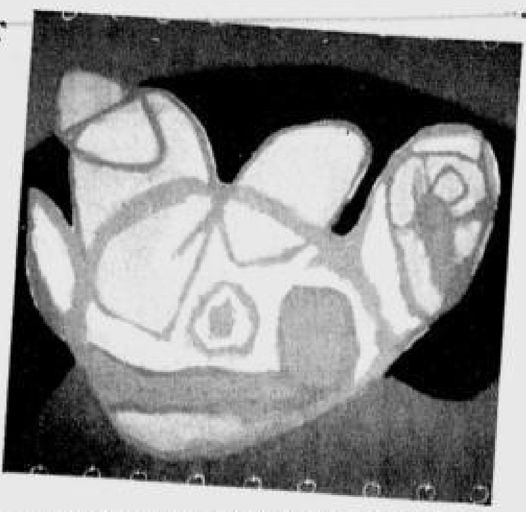
"Don't be afraid of breaching a boundary, of carrying a line too far. Just follow your deepest instincts and you won't go wrong. Only by adventuring can you learn new things."

There is much, much more Danny advice. I began to realize how art was so much like life. Be true to yourself. Trust your instincts. Dare to be different. Get out of the box and follow your bliss.

"The Last Full Moon" (UP Press) won the National Book Award for Best Biography. All GCF Books are available at Fully Booked and PowerBooks Greenbelt 4, SM Megamall and Alabang; National Book Store Shangri-La, Greenhills, Glorieta 1, Greenbelt 1, The Podium and Alabang; Popular Bookstore QC; Solidaridad Bookstore Padre Faura; Datelines in Cubao Shoe Expo; and lately in A Different Bookstore, all branches.

Sophisticated primitivist

By Constantino C. Tejero



"CAVE Dweller"

A FINE SPECIMEN OF ART BRUT WAS recently seen in the work of José Guillermo Naval in "Straggler Soul," pieces in acrylic on canvas, displayed in Galerie Astra, 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo), Bel-Air II, Makati City.

While Art Brut points to that primitivist style its champion Jean Dubuffet associated with the doodling of children, mental patients and unschooled artists, Naval's art even goes beyond that and harks back to the hieroglyphs and rock art of primitive men. He doesn't just doodle, as he seem to literally appropriate their strokes as well as symbols.

Chiefly rendered in earth tones (brown, black, gray, ochre, raw umber, burnt orange, slate-green), most of these are semiabstract pieces with esoteric patterns and shapes that may act as signifiers of the artist's intents and meanings.

A few of them appear like petroglyphs. "Parallel Worlds" has three oblongs broadly outlined in sienna and filled with ochre, arranged parallel on a reddish-brown background, then crosscut with gray lines and curves that seem like characters from an ancient script.

"Bells," composed of a grayish-ochre background streaked with black lines and gray shapes with three bells subliminally outlined in umber, more resembles the syllabic characters of the *alibata*, that ancient Filipino writing system.

Here the artist is either imitating those primitive strokes etched on rock faces or quoting the calligraphic art of Cy Twombly. If they may not mean anything else beyond the too literal and rather childish representations of their titles, they certainly look lovely as decorative art.

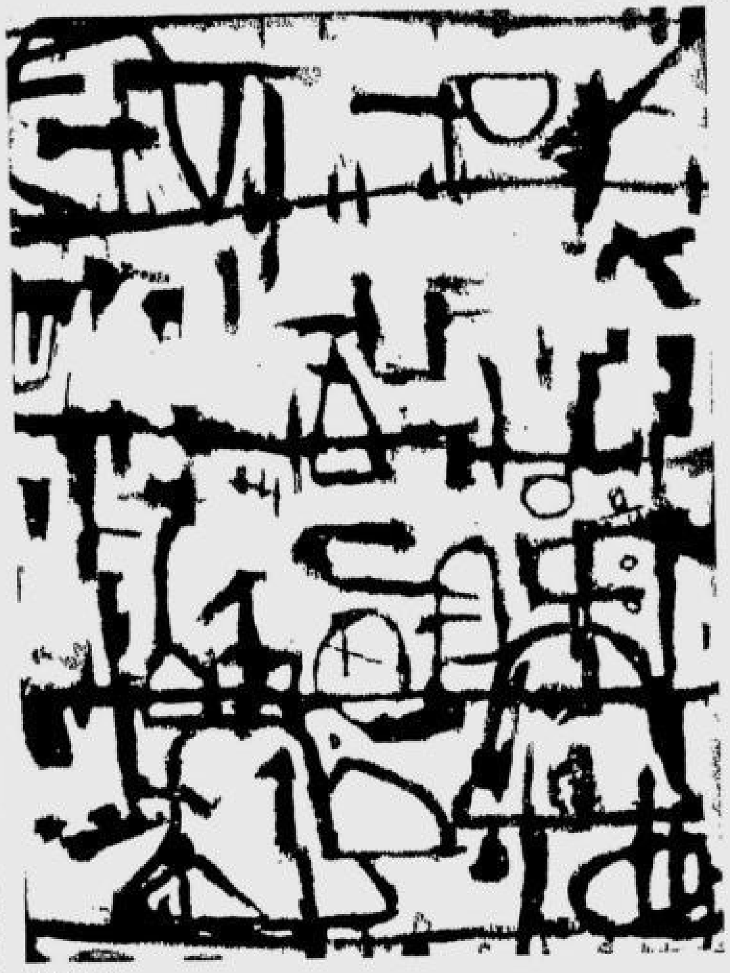
Some of these pieces seem like cave paintings. "Maps" is no more than squiggles, ovoid outline and color patches, in umber and slate-green on gray. But the rudimentary gray figure on tannish brown in "Nude," whether of a pair of breasts or buttocks, is as modern as it is ancient.

Then there is the more obviously titled "Cave Dweller," with its outline of a Neanderthal face rendered in orange and black on an umber background bordered with line drawing of apples or cherries.

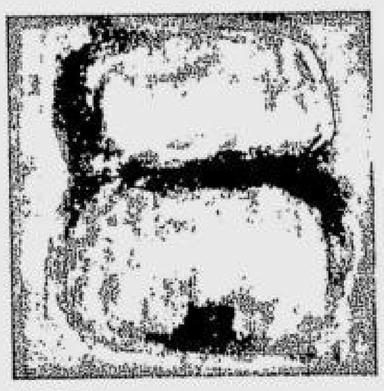
"Chair" departs from Art Brut, and demonstrates the artist can be consummate in figuration if he chooses to. His depiction of a charcoal-gray chair with silvery iridescence for highlight against solid umber is exquisitely realistic.

Naval says he dwells on "subjects of slight interest to others as well as those that have lost value in a world that seems to miss the day." These he takes from "folklore and history, everyday occurrences and little adventures, personal accounts of friends and acquaintances, those silent lingering feelings."

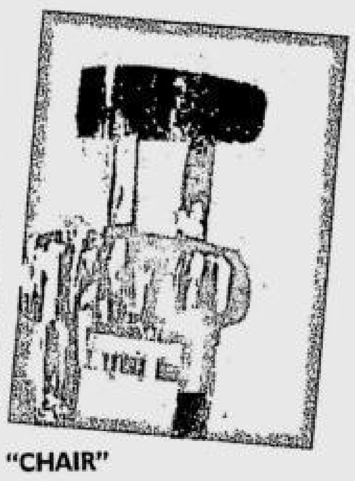
We hold then that these pieces are just vignettes of hanging thoughts. But whatever esoterica the artist has in mind, and whatever ancient forms he may be reproducing here, he has turned them into fresh experiences that seem startlingly new.



"BELLS"



"NUDE"



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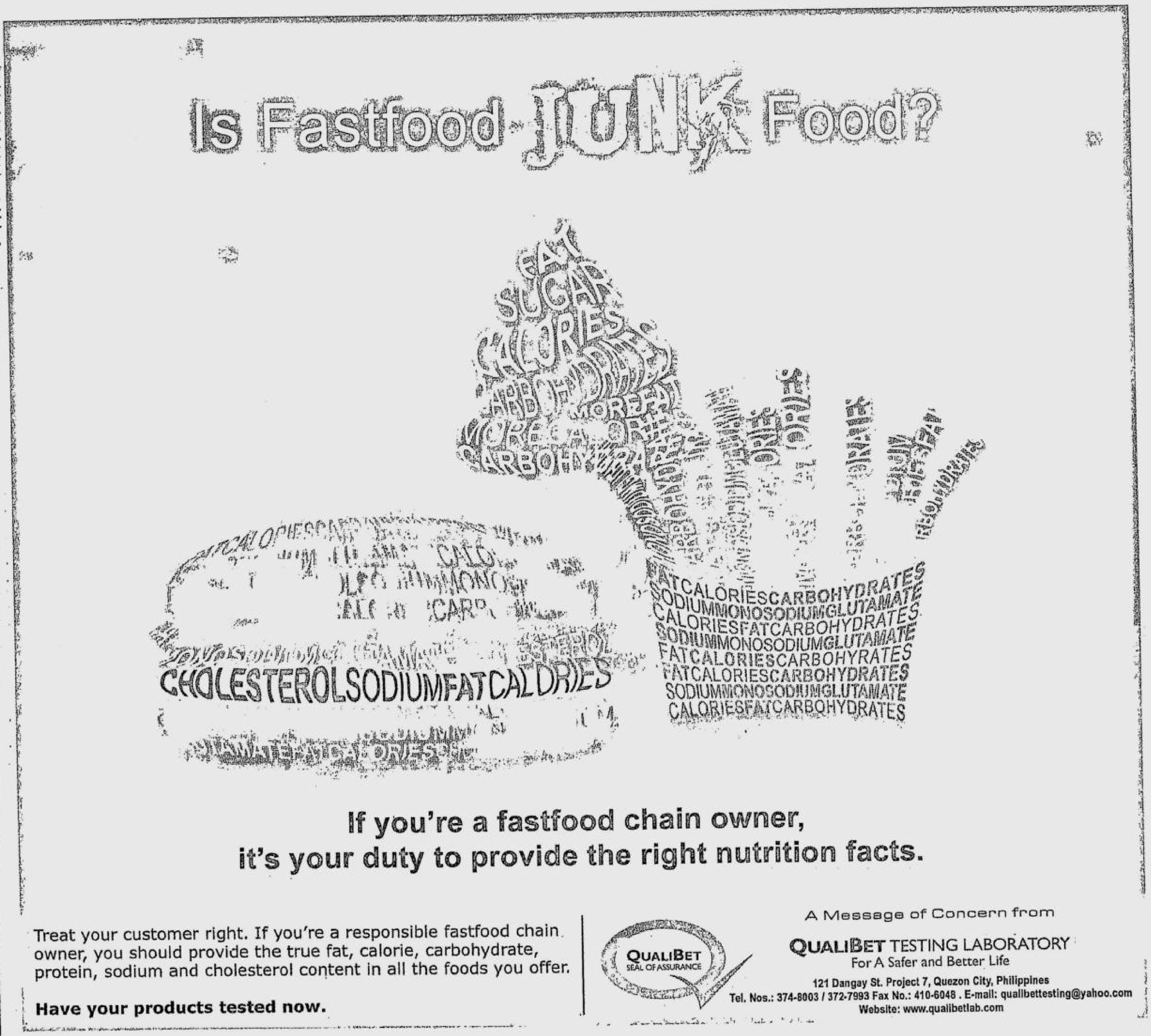

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Beyond the Same Old

You've done the rounds: Boracay, Baguio, Bohol, Galera. Then it hits you. You've nearly memorized every nook and cranny along Session Road. You've tried all the shakes Jonah's has ever dreamt up. **What else is there to do?**

Go beyond the same old summer and spice up your routine by trying something new:

- **Take a trip alone.** Whether you're driving to nearby Tagaytay or boarding a plane to Palau, dare to do it by yourself. True, it'll be a challenge trying to include yourself in snapshots of the Taal Lake, but you can sacrifice a few photographic evidence for the chance to discover something new about yourself. Maybe you'll realize that you can fit two weeks of clothes into one backpack. Or that you really hate taking trips by yourself. **Live and learn.**
- **Add a new element to the old beach routine.** Swim with the whale sharks in Donsol. Go wreck diving in Coron. Learn surfing in La Union. After all, there should be more to just tanning in Boracay with the help of a bottle of beer.
- **Volunteer.** Do something more during those long weekends than merely sitting at home. Read to young cancer patients when you join Kythe, Inc. Or get in touch with the nearest Gawad Kalinga site and help build houses for those who need it. That warm, fuzzy feeling that you get after touching lives definitely trumps the admission price to any summer blockbuster.
- **Sometimes, you need to go the extra mile to make sure that your efforts don't go to waste. Just doing the basics is not enough.** Take brushing, for example. We all think that brushing -- and occasionally flossing -- is enough to keep our mouths clean. **Unfortunately, brushing only cleans 25% of the mouth area.** We usually forget to clean our gums, roof, floor and side walls of the mouth, making mouth germs think that our sense of oral hygiene is on vacation as well. When these germs are not adequately removed, they can cause bad breath, plaque, gum disease or even tooth loss.

  Dentists recommend the following daily oral care regimen: 1) Brush your teeth for two minutes. 2) Use dental floss to remove food particles in between teeth. 3) Rinse with a mouthwash like Listerine. Gargle for 30 seconds to effectively get rid of germs. Not such a bad thing when the pay-off means having a clean mouth and fresh breath the whole day.
- **Only Listerine Mouthwash has a 120-year track record of effectively eliminating mouth germs.** It's no wonder that it's widely recognized by dental associations around the world. What's more, lab tests prove that Listerine reduces plaque by up to 52% and gingivitis by up to 21% versus brushing and flossing alone.*
- **So go beyond the routine, the ordinary, the norm.** Whether it's about ending the summer with a bang or keeping your mouth germ-free, it's better to know that **what seems to be 'enough' just isn't.**

SAY GOODBYE
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* Sharma N. Charles CH, Lynch MC, et al. Adjunctive benefit of an essential oil-containing mouthrinse in reducing plaque and gingivitis in patients who brush and floss regularly: a six-month study. J Am Dent Assoc 2004; 135: 496-504

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PHILIPPINE COMMUNICATION TODAY
Edited by Crispin C. Maslog

New Day titles off the press

LEADING RELIGIOUS AND FILIPINIANA publishing house New Day Publishers is unveiling its latest text and reference books for the new school year, 2007-2008.

Topping the list of new titles is "Philippine Communication Today" by communication educator Crispin Maslog. The book is a comprehensive sequel to "Philippine Communication, An Introduction," which was published in 1988.

The 491-page, 25-chapter book contains a wealth of information on the history of Philippine mass communication, terms and concepts, the role of communication in a crisis and in the formation of values, among others, written by respected practitioners.

The book also contains comprehensive discussions on development communication and development journalism, book publishing, komiks, feature writing, broadcasting and film, and adjuncts of media. The book, which recognizes existing technologies and emerging trends toward convergence in communication, is a recommended textbook for collegiate students.

"A Woman Pope, Neanderthals and Other Stories" by Denis Murphy is a compilation of 24 short stories of the author on the plight of the urban poor, on religion, Roman Catholic popes, original sin, the experiences of growing old, and other light but insightful topics.

"Pagbuo ng Mito at Kapangyarihang Kultural ng Babae sa Lipunan" by Cesar D. Orsal dissects the myth of the so-called "movie queens," their image in the postwar movies, as well as their cultural influence on society. Written in Filipino, the author also makes case studies of popular movie queens of Philippine films.

The books are available in leading bookstores nationwide. Call 9288046 and 9275982; e-mail sales@newdaypublishers.com.

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Romantic concertos from Aparri to Argao

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

NEXT MONTH, PIANISTS Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes will embark on another edition of their Romantic Piano Concerto Journey (RPCJ) Tour—their 14th in seven years.

When the tour started in 2001, in Cebu, the country was just in the throes of another Edsa upheaval. Just before the opening concert, there were anti-Erap rallies all over Cebu. What a revolutionary time to promote romantic concertos!

What made those outreach concertos on two pianos click?

First, the concerts were not just about performances but also about music. They allowed for thorough discussion and interaction with the audience on what made a musician, how the concertos came about, and how many hours a musician would need to master the romantic-concerto repertoire.

On the first six years of the tour, Santamaria and Reyes went to remote provinces where the people had not heard the complete movements of the Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and Rachmaninoff concertos.

The destinations varied. In one session, the pianists would find themselves in music studios and music stores in Metro Manila. Then, they would find themselves in a shopping mall in Cebu or Las Piñas, or in a church in Makati City.

One weekend, they were in typhoon-ravaged Virac, Catanduanes, where they had to manage with weather-beaten pianos. The baby grand pianos in Bangkok in a private concert hall of Thailand's national artist were sheer heaven for the instrumentalists. But in Ilagan, Isabela, they had to make do with two upright pianos, the innards of which had to be opened to increase the volume.

Somewhere in Mindanao, the two were offered two brand-new Yamaha pianos, but when they saw them, their jaws dropped when they noticed they were, indeed, new—they were, in fact, electronic pianos!

The pianists had also been to Antique, Vietnam, Malaysia. Last year, they were back in Bacolod and Cebu City.

In Argao, Cebu, the hosts were former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., and the venue was the historic Argao church. One music-lover admitted the concert was one of the most memorable musical events he had experienced in his native town.

For one reason or another, concertos are unplayable in the provinces because of the high cost of transporting orchestra members. But with the orchestra practically reduced to two pianos, music-lovers from Aparri to Davao finally have the chance to hear piano concertos in all their pianistic and orchestral glory.

ROMANTIC/ D3

PIANISTS Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes

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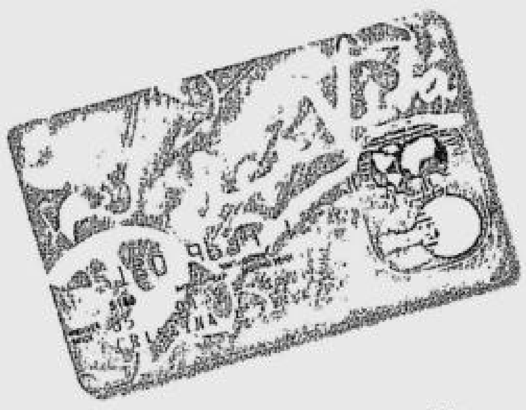

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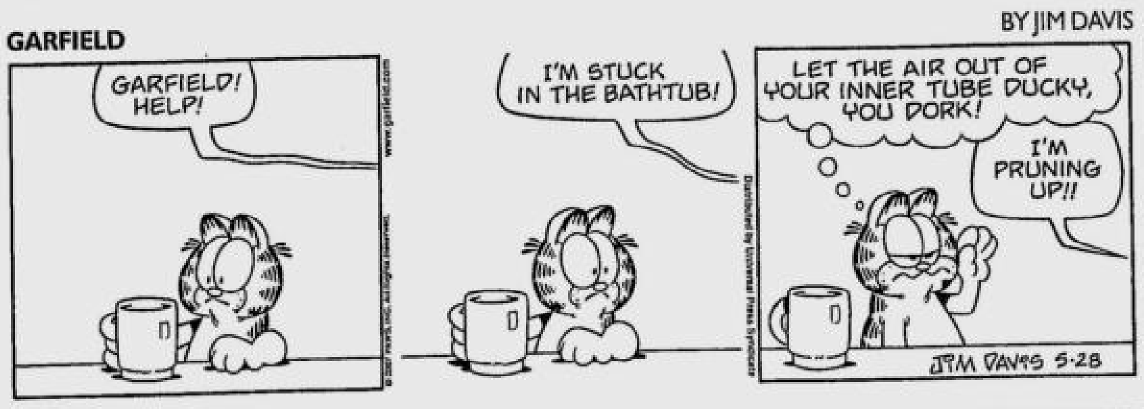
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A. LIPIN

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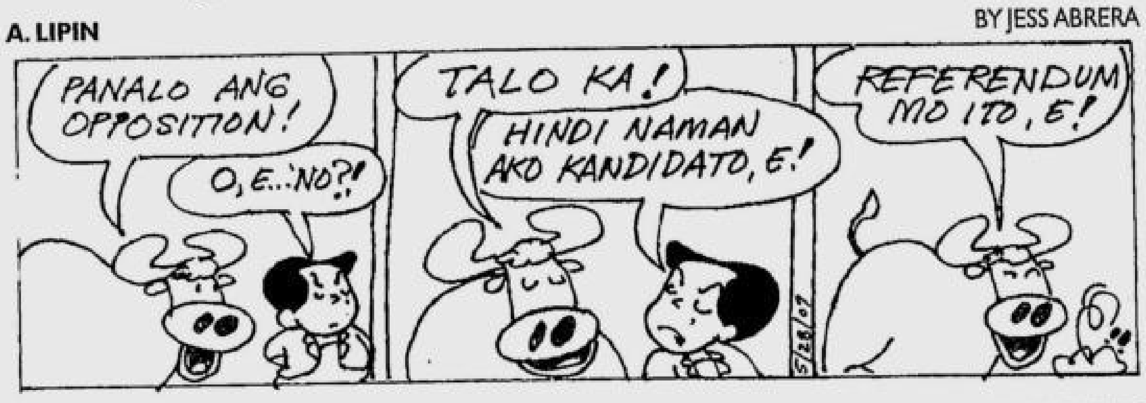
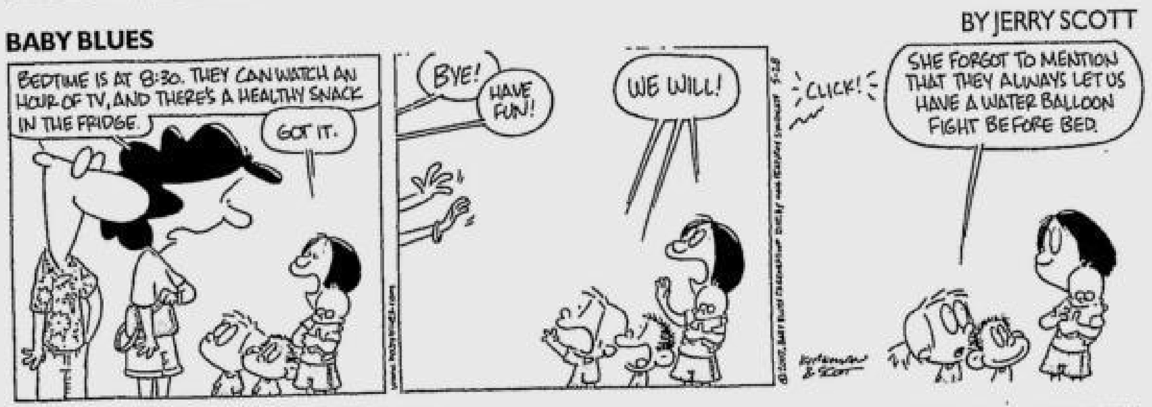

PANALO ANG OPPOSITION!
O, E...NO?!
TALO KA!
HINDI NAMAN AKO KANDIDATO, E!
REFERENDUM MO ITO, E!
5/28/07

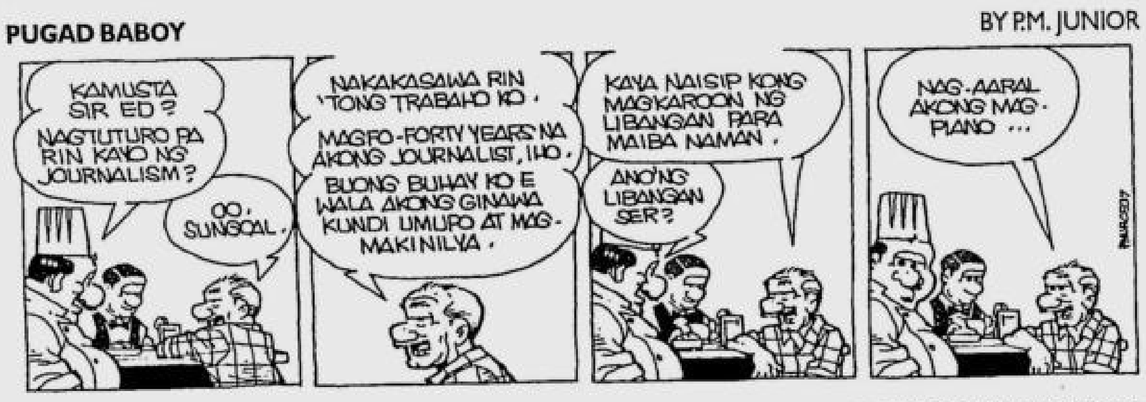
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


BEDTIME IS AT 8:30. THEY CAN WATCH AN HOUR OF TV, AND THERE'S A HEALTHY SNACK IN THE FRIDGE.
GOT IT.
BYE!
HAVE FUN!
WE WILL!
CLICK!
SHE FORGOT TO MENTION THAT THEY ALWAYS LET US HAVE A WATER BALLOON FIGHT BEFORE BED.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

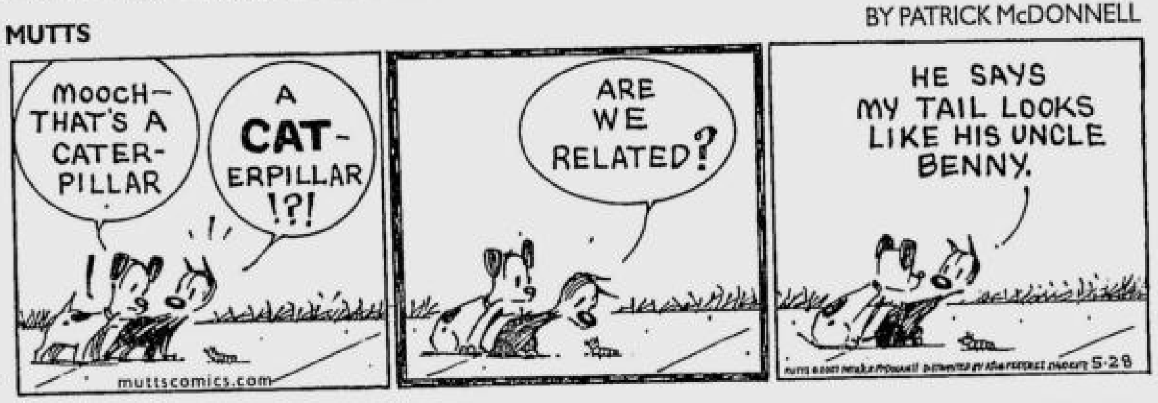
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KAMUSTA SIR ED? NAGTUTURO PA RIN KAYO NG JOURNALISM?
OO, SUNGCAL.
NAKAKASAWA RIN 'TONG TRABAHO KO.
MAGFO-FORTY YEARS NA AKONG JOURNALIST, IHO.
BUONG BUHAY KO E WALA AKONG GINAWA KUNDI UMUPO AT MAG-MAKINILYA.
KAYA NAISIP KONG MAGKAROON NG LIBANGAN PARA MAIBA NAMAN.
ANO'NG LIBANGAN SER?
NAG-AARAL AKONG MAG-PIANO ...
PMJR2007

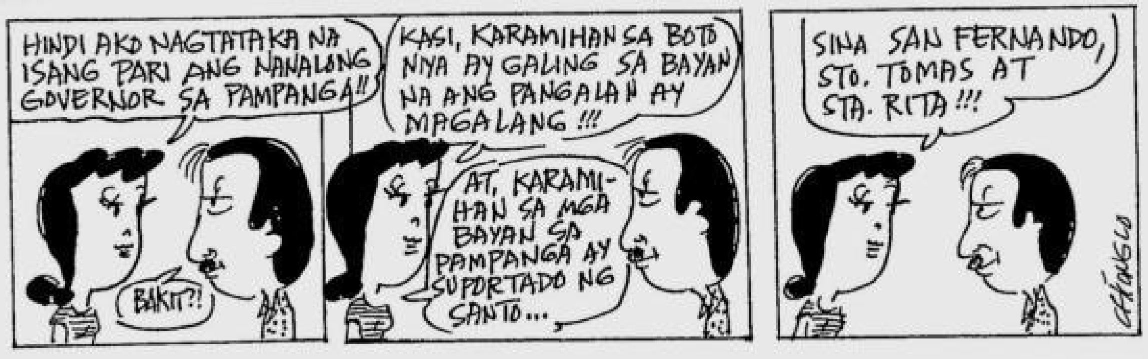
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH— THAT'S A CATER-PILLAR
A CAT-ERPILLAR !?!
ARE WE RELATED?
HE SAYS MY TAIL LOOKS LIKE HIS UNCLE BENNY.
muttscomics.com
5-28

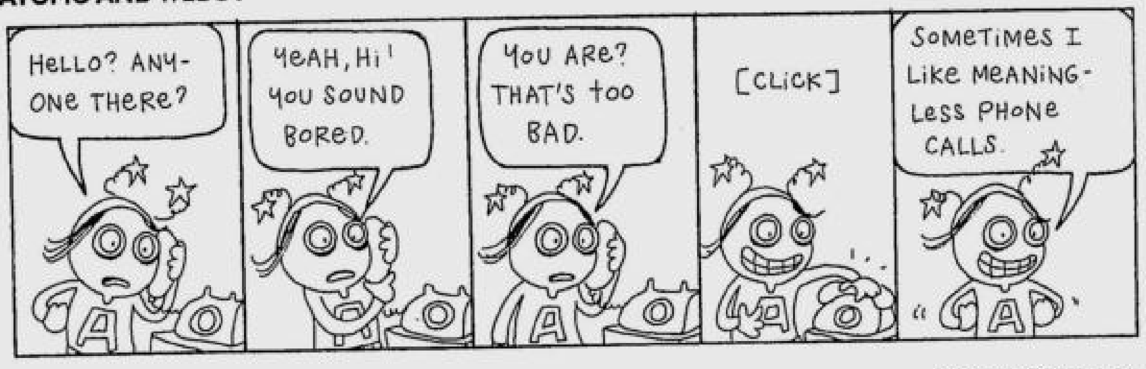
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI AKO NAGTATAKA NA ISANG PARI ANG NANALONG GOVERNOR SA PAMPANGA!!
BAKIT?!
KASI, KARAMIHAN SA BOTO NIYA AY GALING SA BAYAN NA ANG PANGALAN AY MAGALANG !!!
AT, KARAMI-HAN SA MGA BAYAN SA PAMPANGA AY SUPORTADO NG SANTO...
SINA SAN FERNANDO, STO. TOMAS AT STA. RITA !!!
CHIONGLO

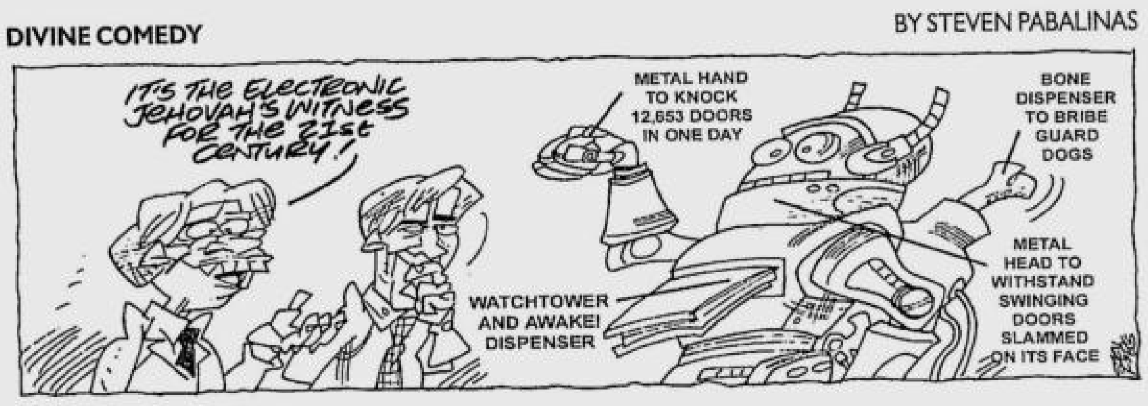
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HELLO? ANY-ONE THERE?
YEAH, HI! YOU SOUND BORED.
YOU ARE? THAT'S TOO BAD.
[CLICK]
SOMETIMES I LIKE MEANING-LESS PHONE CALLS.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS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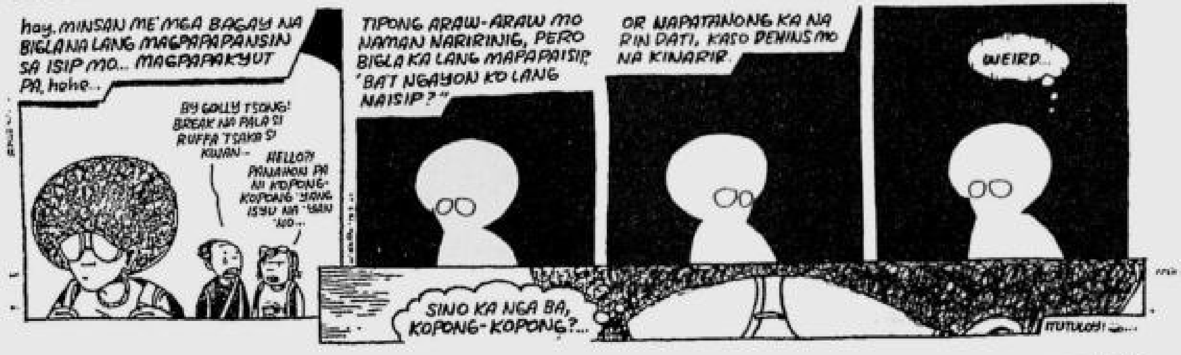
BONE DISPENSER TO BRIBE GUARD DOGS
METAL HEAD TO WITHSTAND SWINGING DOORS SLAMMED ON ITS FACE
WATCHTOWER AND AWAKE! DISPENSER

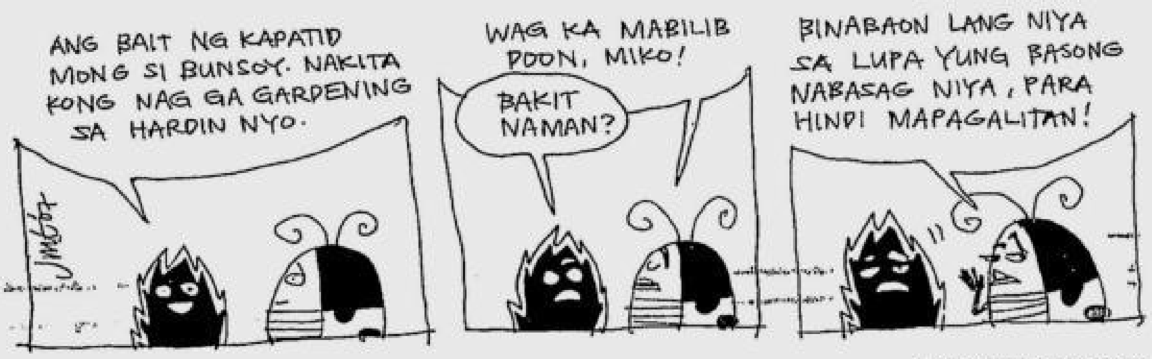
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay, MINSAN ME' MGA BAGAY NA BIGLANA LANG MAGPAPAPANSIN SA ISIP MO... MAGPAPAKYUT PA, hehe..
BY GOLLY TSONG! BREAK NA PALA SI RUFFA TSAKA SI KUAN...
HELLO?! PANAHON PA NI KOPONG-KOPONG 'YONG ISYU NA 'YAN 'NO...
TIPONG ARAW-ARAW MO NAMAN NARIRINIG, PERO BIGLA KA LANG MAPAPAISIP, 'BAT NGAYON KO LANG NAISIP?"
OR NAPATANONG KA NA RIN DATI, KASO DENINS MO NA KINARIR.
WEIRD...
SINO KA NGA BA, KOPONG-KOPONG?...
ITUTULOY!

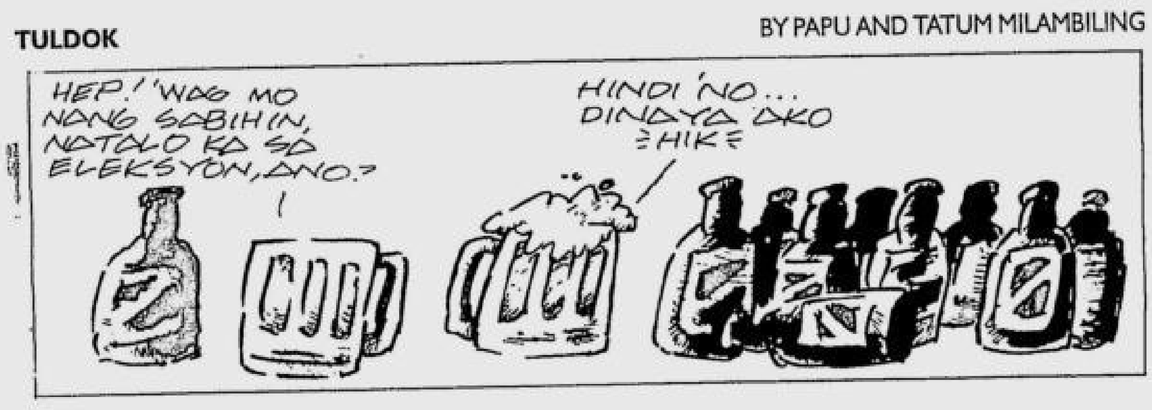
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG BAIT NG KAPATID MONG SI BUNSOY. NAKITA KONG NAG GA GARDENING SA HARDIN NYO.
WAG KA MABILIB POON, MIKO!
BAKIT NAMAN?
BINABAON LANG NIYA SA LUPA YUNG BASONG NABASAG NIYA, PARA HINDI MAPAGALITAN!
JMTJD

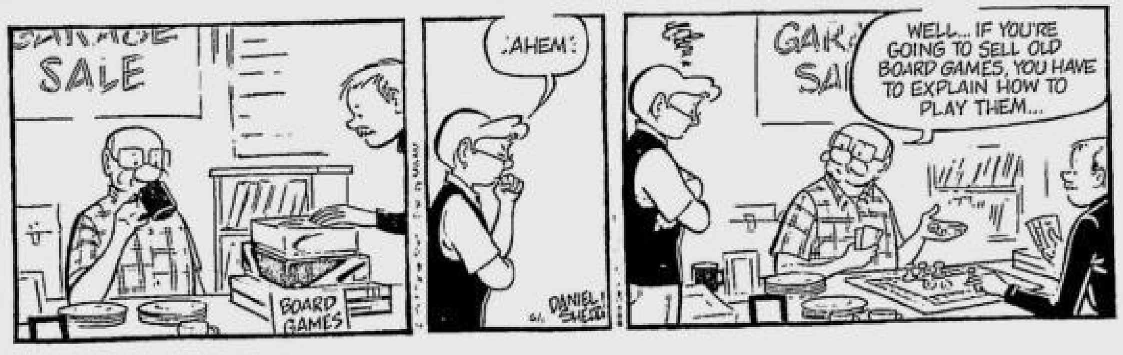
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

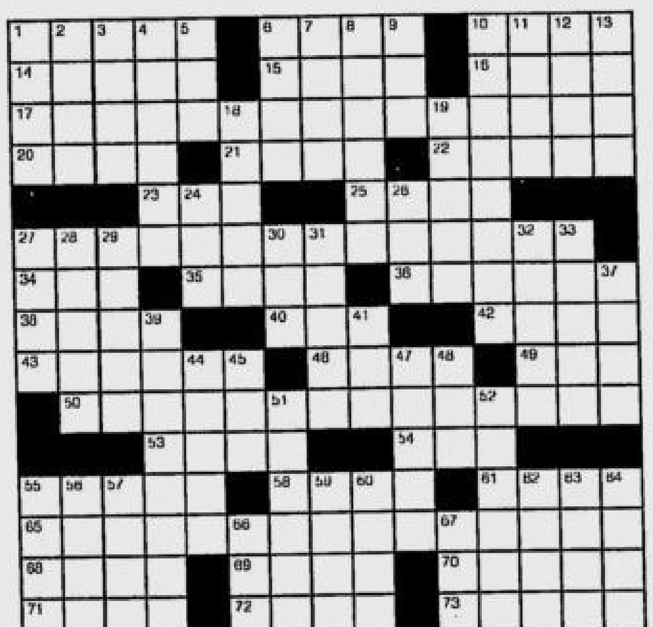

HEP! 'WAG MO NANG SABIHIN, NATALO KA SA ELEKSYON, ANO.?
HINDI 'NO... DINAYA AKO
HIK

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GARAGE SALE
BOARD GAMES
AHEM
GARAGE SALE
WELL... IF YOU'RE GOING TO SELL OLD BOARD GAMES, YOU HAVE TO EXPLAIN HOW TO PLAY THEM...
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

5/28/07

ACROSS
1 Comic absurdity
6 French cleric
10 Haydn's sobriquet
14 Oak beginning
15 Oaf
16 Iowa college town
17 Check
20 Marsh grass stalk
21 Finish second
22 Producer Spelling
23 Caesar's three
25 Church vestments
27 Check
34 End of a bus.?
35 Greek portico
36 Killed in the Oval Office
38 Relative of etc.
40 Schedule abbr.
42 Fish-eating eagle
43 Go by again
46 Rara follower
49 MO ball-cap letters
50 Check
53 One of these days
54 Golf gadget
55 Really enjoy
58 Practice punching
61 Ceased to exist
65 Check
68 Host of Valhalla
69 Newts
70 Jump the line
71 Sharp taste
72 Tableland
73 Colorful chalcedony

DOWN
1 So-so
2 Summit
3 Strong cord
4 Alternative to cash
5 Terminate
6 Ray of "Pat and Mike"
7 Moves to the beat
8 Chest of drawers
9 Ike's command
10 Leech
11 Part of USA
12 Cancun coin
13 NAACP part
18 Ness of "The Untouchables"
19 "It Happened One Night" star
24 Contingencies
26 Wash rm.
27 Stadium level
28 Sign up to compete
29 Land or sea follower
30 Shad output
31 Doha's land
32 Body trunks
33 Barbra Streisand film
37 Secluded valley
39 Roping, as a steer
41 Gardner of filmdom
44 Tempest
45 __ Paulo, Brazil
47 Ice breaker, briefly
48 Sault __ Marie
51 Not healthy
52 Mattress denizen
55 Dundee lad
56 Alan of "M*A*S*H"
57 Conceited
59 Mine excavations
60 Latin handle
62 Jot
63 Blue pencil
64 Unit of force
66 Zzzz letters
67 Victrola mfr.

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	I	N	T	O	P	■	C	O	S	S	E	T	S
U	N	N	E	R	V	E	■	O	P	T	I	M	A	L
T	E	S	T	I	E	R	■	R	E	A	P	P	L	Y
A	M	I	■	P	R	I	M	I	N	G	■	L	A	N
T	O	S	H	■	C	L	A	N	S	■	W	A	R	E
E	N	T	I	T	L	I	N	G	■	F	I	N	I	S
S	E	S	S	I	O	N	S	■	A	E	N	E	A	S
■	■	■	S	L	U	G	F	E	S	T	S	■	■	■
E	S	P	I	E	D	■	I	N	S	O	L	A	T	E
S	T	U	N	S	■	H	E	T	E	R	O	D	O	X
T	A	N	G	■	P	O	L	A	R	■	W	A	R	P
E	N	D	■	E	R	U	D	I	T	E	■	P	R	O
E	L	I	S	I	O	N	■	L	I	G	A	T	E	S
M	E	T	E	R	E	D	■	E	V	I	L	O	N	E
S	Y	S	T	E	M	S	■	D	E	S	E	R	T	S

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5/28/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are quite unique. You're energetic and extremely capable. You have many ideas, and you're not afraid to act on them. In particular, you love beginning new things. Whatever you do, you give it your all. You're very straightforward and focused. People know where they stand with you. Look forward to a lovely, social year ahead. Relationships and marriage are favored!

Birthdate of: Kylie Minogue, singer; Gladys Knight, singer; Rudy Giuliani, politician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): In the next few weeks, you'll need more downtime alone. However, it's a good time for family discussions about matters that are important for all of you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The tempo of events in your daily life will accelerate in the next few weeks. Don't stay at home. Just accept this and go with the flow.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're going to be more concerned with business and commercial affairs than usual. Something having to do with high finance, sharing possessions or major purchases is important.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your mind will be busy for the next two weeks. It will jump from one thing to another extremely fast. You might also have a strong urge to get out and travel. You're curious!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You'll want to go off by yourself to think or study in the next few weeks. You might become more concerned with spiritual or religious matters.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's time now to start to think about your goals and expectations of life. For starters, are your goals your goals or the goals of somebody else?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In the month ahead, it's a good time to talk to bosses, superiors, parents, teachers and VIPs. It's even a good time to try to get a promotion. You're very clear about what you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You'll enjoy conversations with others, especially if they deal with exotic subjects or philosophical matters or anything having to do with other countries and different cultures. You're hungry to learn something!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might have to deal with negotiations about finances, shared property, insurance matters, taxes and debt. Just do what you have to do.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're entering a brief month in which discussions with partners and close friends will be meaningful. In part, it's because you can take a more objective view about things.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're really gearing up to do some kind of mental work. Tackle any kind of task that requires attention to detail, even if it is routine.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're playful and eager for fun. Mental games, pranks, parties and reading for pleasure will particularly please you now and in the next few weeks.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	2		7		9		5	
6			8	4	5			3
		1				9		
2	9						3	7
	1			5			4	
8	4						9	1
		7				3		
1			6	9	7			5
	5		1		2		6	

Difficulty Level ★

5/28

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	3	7	9	6	2	1	8	4
2	1	4	5	8	3	9	6	7
9	6	8	1	4	7	2	3	5
6	8	3	2	9	4	7	5	1
1	5	2	6	7	8	4	9	3
4	7	9	3	1	5	6	2	8
3	4	5	7	2	6	8	1	9
7	2	1	8	5	9	3	4	6
8	9	6	4	3	1	5	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Romantic concertos . . .

From page D1

As Reyes and Santamaria embark on their 14th tour, one wishes them more concertos to come, and bigger, wider and more enthusiastic audiences from all age brackets.

Pinoy wins international tilt

Filipino violinist Diomedes "Babes" Saraza won first prize in the Woodmere Young Artists Competition in Hewlett, New York, in March. The awarding of prizes will take place June 2.

Saraza's winning piece, the Khachaturian violin concerto, was broadcast in New York and was heard last Saturday over the "Bravo Filipino" program of Bert Robledo on radio station DZFE.

The young violinist is also headed for the Paganini Competition in Italy and the Winiaski Competition in Poland. This year, Babes, along with his brother, Maurrice Ivan, will be heard in a joint concert in August this year. Details will be announced later.

Summa cum laude

Oliver Salonga, two-time first prize winner of the National Music Competition for Young Artists and a graduate of the Philippine High School for the Arts, graduated summa cum laude on May 12 at the Conservatory of Music of Lynn University in Florida, USA.

Salonga had passed auditions in several music schools like Juilliard, but he chose the Lynn because his favorite music teacher was a faculty member there.

Pundaquit festival

The 15th season of Pundaquit Festival in San Antonio, Zambales opened yesterday with art exhibits in Siemen's Hall, featuring the works of Plet Bolipata, recipient of a residency grant from the Vermont Art Center; Carlo Gabuco, Philippine Art Award finalist; Jan Leeroy New, Metrobank grand prize winner; Zaniel Mariano, Brendale Tadeo and Don Salubayba.

VIOLINIST Diomedes Saraza Jr. with Prof. Chin Kim of the Juilliard School

OLIVER Salonga, pianist

These were followed by the concert of the Makiling Ensemble along with the scholars of Casa San Miguel Foundation.

Founded by violinist Coke Bolipata, the Pundaquit Festival has been graced international artists such as Cecile Licad and Antonio Meneses.

Yesterday's festival opening was highlighted by a memorial Mass for the second death anniversary of Casa San Miguel patron Ricardo K. Bolipata, who had donated the land for the festival site, including its primary structure.

MSO plays Elgar

After its triumphant engagement with conductor Helen Quach, the Manila Symphony Orchestra mounts another concert on June 1,7:30 p.m., at St. Cecilia's Hall with violinist William Harvey as soloist. The concert will feature the works of Sir Edward Elgar.

Poetry reading at Casa San Pablo

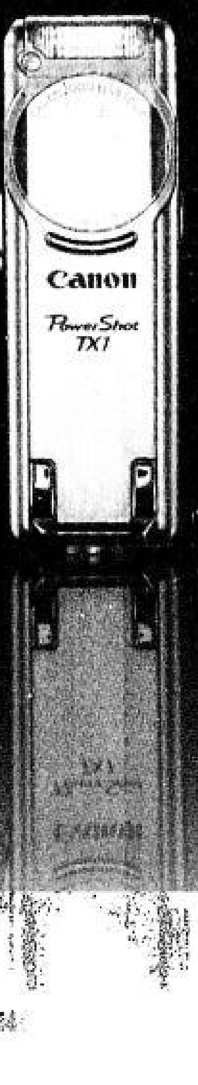
SAN PABLO-BORN POET Rofel Brion will read some poems from his latest collection, "Sandali," at Casa San Pablo on June 3, 4:30 p.m.

Bubbles Bandojo, RC and Veepee Pinpin will sing some of Brion's favorite liturgical songs, while another friend, Arnel Aquino, SJ, will play piano compositions.

Bandojo has recorded the album "Song From the Upper Room" for the Jesuit Music Ministry. Aquino has recorded several liturgical albums, including "Lauds and Vespers."

Located at Barangay San Roque in San Pablo City, Laguna, Casa San Pablo is a country inn that offers overnight stay with three meals at only P1,500 per person. Special student rates, artist's grants and group discounts are available.

For reservations, call 0917-8126687 and 0917-5268628, email casasanpablo@pldtdsl.net or visit www.casasanpablo.com.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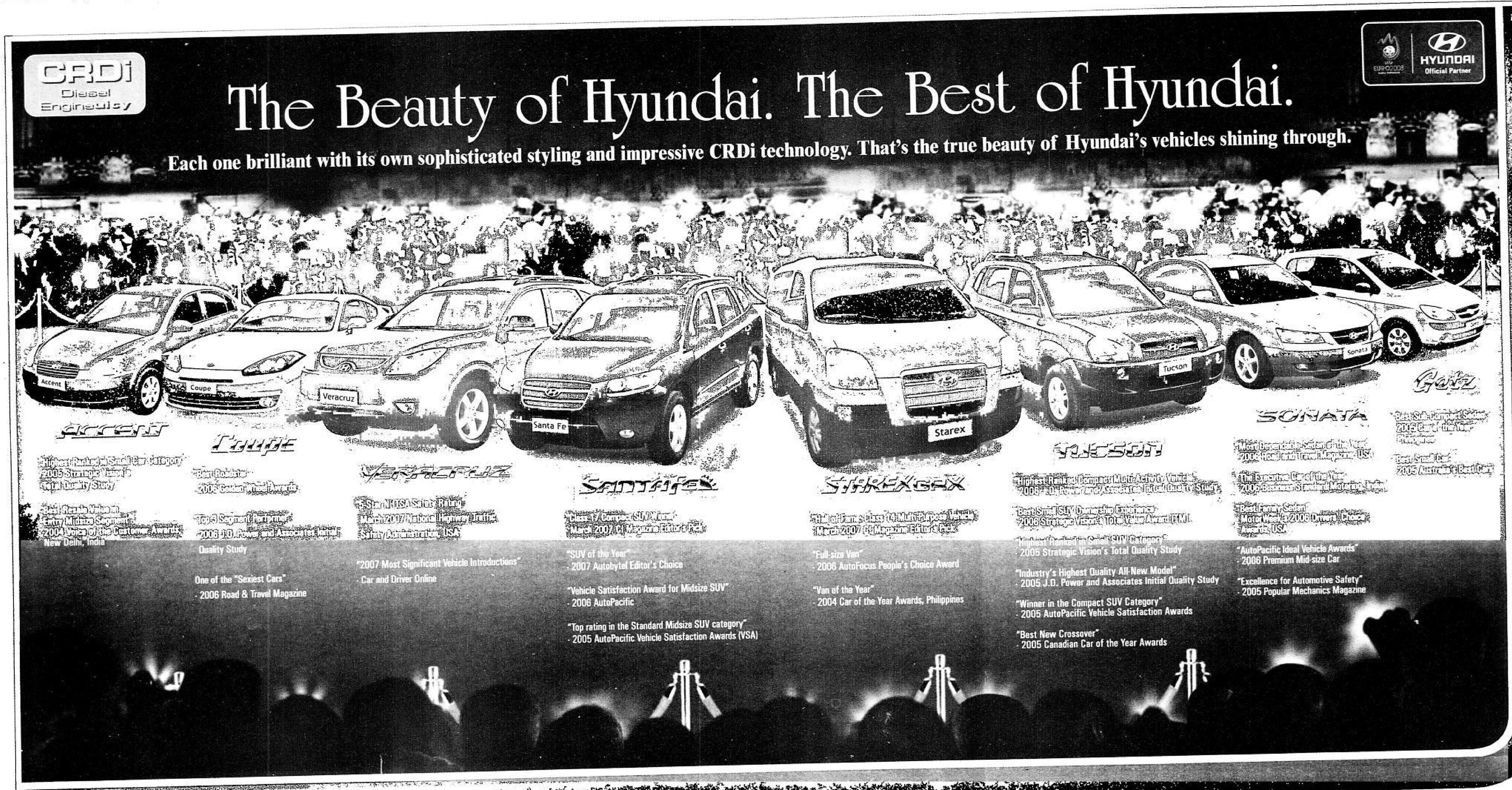

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- 2004 Voice of the Customer Awards, New Delhi, India

COUPE

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March 2007 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, USA

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- Car and Driver Online

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- March 2007 C! Magazine Editor's Pick

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"Top rating in the Standard Midsize SUV category"
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- 2006 Business Standard Motoring, India

"Best Family Sedan"
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"AutoPacific Ideal Vehicle Awards"
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Before winning 'American Idol,' Jordin Sparks says, her life's high points were getting her driver's license and taking off her braces

Finale song 'spoke' to her

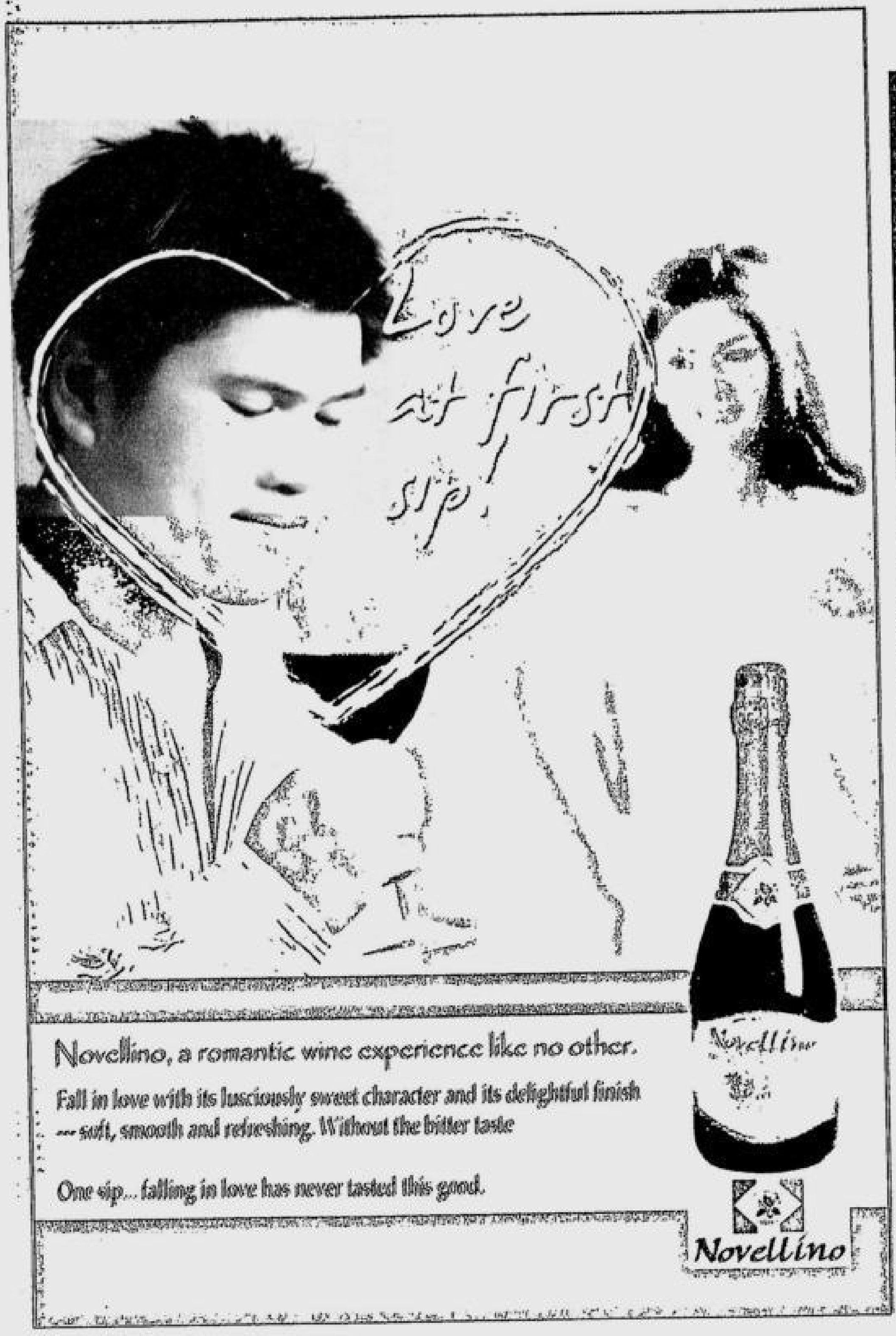
INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

SHE WAS A DIE-HARD FAN of the show. Now she is the newly crowned "American Idol." For Jordin Sparks, this is nothing less than a dream come true.

In a teleconference with the international press after her victory, the 17-year-old from Arizona, sounding hoarse, said she had followed the reality talent search since she was 12. She added that she looked up to previous winners Kelly

FINALE/ E2



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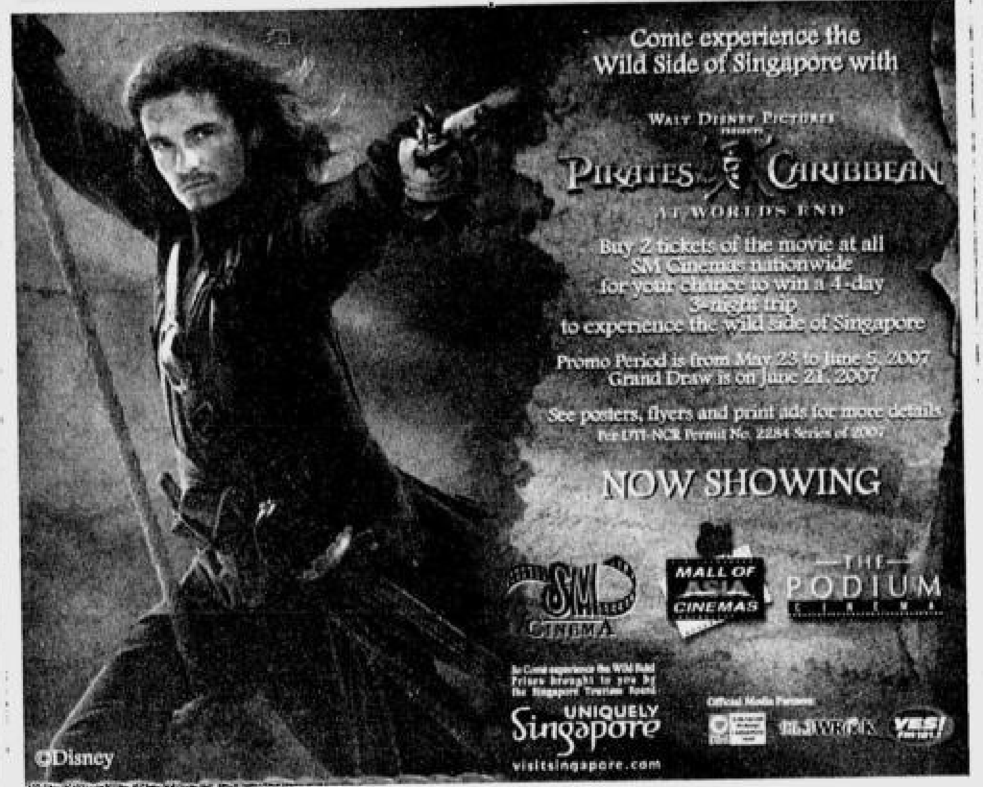

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12 SHREK 3

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12 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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8 RESERVED
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7 FRACTURE
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Finale song 'spoke' to her

From page E1

Clarkson and Carrie Underwood and planned to pattern her career after theirs. "They're just so successful," she gushed.

Jordin won the sixth edition of the No. 1 TV singing competition in the world over Blake Lewis, from Washington. She landed a management contract with "Idol" creator Simon Fuller's 19 Management and a recording contract with BMG Music Group, headed by Clive Davis. The song that she performed in the finale, "This Is My Now" will be her first single.

She said the song "spoke" to her. "I remember sitting down when I first listened to the song; I couldn't believe how perfect it was. It's about there being a time when you think you couldn't do something but now you can."

You won a Mustang, courtesy of American Idol. Are you a good driver?

I got my driver's license July of last year. I haven't gotten any tickets yet.

How did you handle various pressures throughout the season?

It was cool. Since I am a minor, I was supposed to have a guardian—so I had my mom or my nanny throughout the season.

At what point did you first think you could win?

I guess when I made it to Top 12, I was like, "Oh, that's one in 12 chances—and it turned out pretty well.

Has Blake taught you any beatboxing?

He tried, but I'm really horrible at it.

What has your schedule been like since you won?

Very crazy, actually. Yesterday I couldn't get to bed until 1:30 and then I had to wake up at 4. But, you know, it was really fun. We did Leno, we did Ellen and now I'm talking to you, guys.

How have you prepared yourself for all these?

I don't think you can prepare yourself for it. I'm kinda just taking it one step at a time.

There's gonna be a lot of pressure for sure, how will you keep yourself grounded?

I have my family with me. I love to have that kind of support around me. I'm very sure they will keep me grounded. They're always like, "Don't let it get in your head, Jordin."

Is there any female pop star you wanna collaborate with?

I love Christina Aguilera and Martina McBride... I would love to work with them.

Have you thought about Broadway?

Yeah, I have actually. When my dad was still playing football, we went to Broadway quite a lot. We saw "Lion King" and "Beauty and the Beast." I love musical theater and I love the performance aspect of it. Singing will always be number one but, on the side, maybe someday I'll be able to do that, too.

What do you plan to do first when you get home?

I wanna sleep in my own bed. I wanna play with my puppies. Spend time with my best friend and read a book.

What kind of album are you planning?

I love almost all types of music—country, pop, r&b, rock 'n' roll. I'd love to do a little bit of each.

How much has your life changed from high school?

It's changed so much. In high school, I just hang out with friends. I was a normal kid. I was excited to get my driver's license. But I was way more excited to be on "American Idol." I'm a die-hard fan. I think I'm still pretty much that way.

Would you say that you were popular in high school?

I was kind of a floater, I hang out with everybody. It was really cool. I wasn't like in one clique.

Would you have been more confident if you were up against Melinda [Doolittle] in the final?

I don't know. I actually thought it was going to be Blake and Melinda so I was like "Oh cool!" But Melinda is one of my best friends ever and I love her and if I had been up against her, I'd have been so happy for her if she won. She is so amazing.

Do you think you could have won against her?

It would have been anybody's game, I guess.

Who is your celebrity crush?

I'm gonna have to say Brad Pitt because he is just so cute!

How are you handling all the sudden fame and what is the good and the bad part?

It's still kinda weird to me. I can't even... I've only been doing this for one day.

What were the pinnacles of your life before "Idol"?

You're gonna laugh at me... getting my braces off was awesome and then getting my driver's license.

What is the greatest lesson you learned from your "American Idol" experience?

This whole process has kinda made me a better person. It taught me how to be a better performer. I wouldn't have traded that for anything.

What did Blake whisper to you just before the announcement?

He said, "I love you, sweetheart." I said I loved him, too.

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Cocoy leads Laurels in CCP concert

AIZA SEGUERRA

VETERAN SINGER-THESPIAN Victor "Cocoy" Laurel stars in "Cocoy Laurel in Concert" on June 22 at the CCP Main Theater. Joining him onstage will be his sister Iwi, and nieces Denise Laurel and Nicole Asensio.

Cocoy was in the cast of Cameron Mackintosh's West End and Australian productions of "Miss Saigon," playing the Vietnamese Commisar in the first, and the male lead role of The Engineer in the latter.

The CCP concert will premiere Cocoy's original compositions—"Uliran," "Love Song," "Tango," "Ahay" and "Tunay na Pag-ibig"—with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

The concert is presented by MTV Philippines' Live Concert Series. Tickets from P1,050 to P7,350. Call 891-9999.

SHOW TIME

Aiza as Gary Coleman

Aiza Seguerra joins the cast of Atlantis Productions' "Avenue Q," which opens at the Meralco Theater on Aug. 17.

Aiza plays Gary Coleman (yes, *that* Gary Coleman) in the Tony Award-winning musical that combines people and puppets.

Last seen onstage in "The Rocky Horror Show," Aiza says of "Avenue Q": "I fell in love with the 'Sesame Street' gone wrong concept. It's such a hilarious musical." Directed by Bobby Garcia and Chari Arespacochaga. Call 892-7078.

Back-to-back treat

"Chad & Jeremy and The Association Together" goes onstage June 15 at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

The show is being presented by Rene de Guia's Ovation Productions. Other shows are slated June 16 at the Cebu Waterfront Hotel and June 17 at St. La Salle Coliseum in Bacolod City.

Aguilera in Taguig

CHRISTINA AGUILERA

Grammy winner Christina Aguilera brings her "Back to Basics" world promo tour to the Philippines on July 6.

The petite powerhouse takes center stage in "Christina Aguilera—Back to Basics Live in Taguig," at the Fort Bonifacio Open Field. She will perform hits from her latest album, "Back to Basics," including the Grammy-winning "Ain't No Other Man."

Destination: Bossa

The CompanY stages a concert series entitled "Destination: Bossa Live!" at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental in Makati on June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6 and 20 at 9 p.m. Saxophoro, a saxophone quintet, joins The CompanY on June 1 and 8. Call 750-8888.

Tonight

Art Manuntag at RJTV Bar, Bel-Air, Makati

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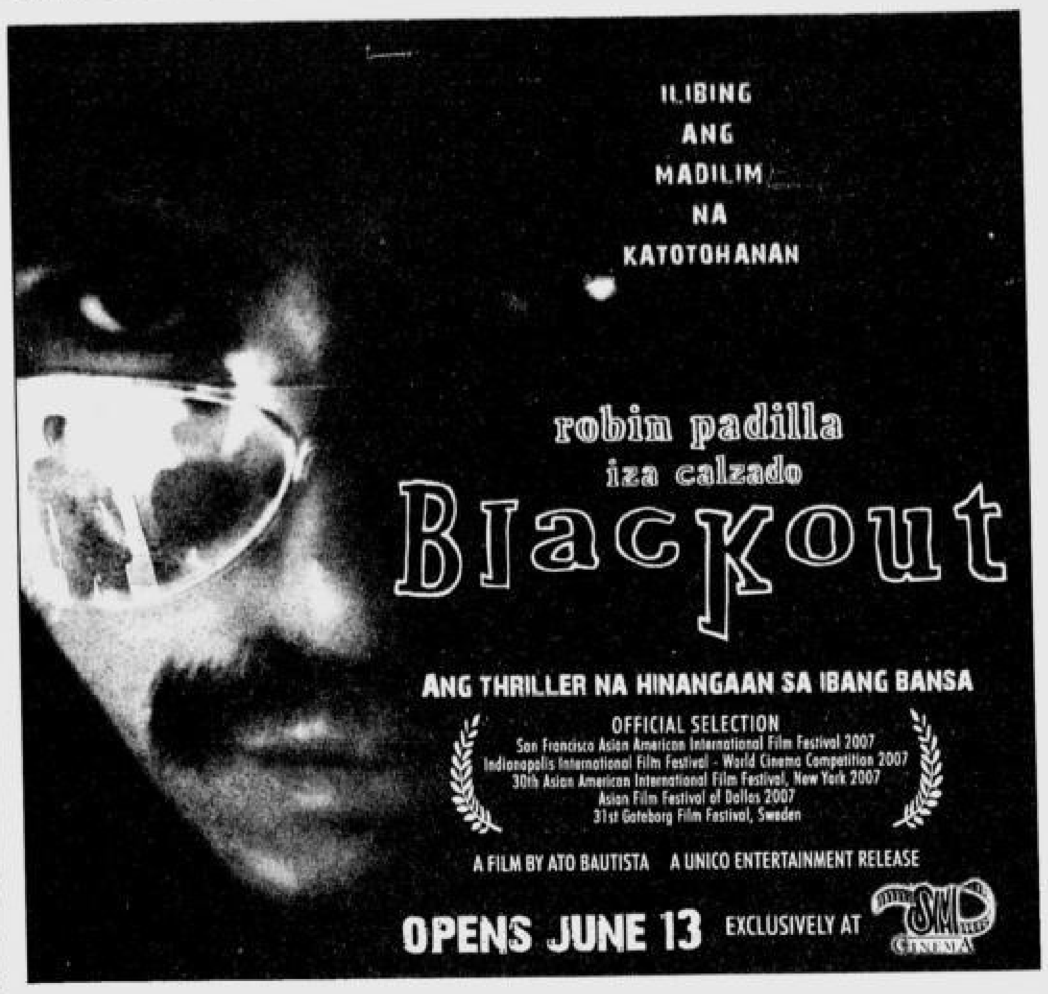

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TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	EVERY MONDAY May 31 , 2007 June 15 , 2007	DANCE NIGHT RJ Jimenez Champion of the World (Jed Madela)	7:00 PM 8:00 PM 8:30 PM

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It seemed like a good idea at the time...

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NEW DIRECTORS WHOSE DEBUT films turn out to be not as good as the movies in their minds should take heart from the revelation of top meggmen that they, too, gave birth to stillborn movies or flops early in their careers—and yet recovered and made much better films that rehabilitated their reputations.

Take **Ang Lee**: He's justly celebrated for his masterful films like "Sense and Sensibility," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Brokeback Mountain," but he blushes over his biggest cinematic booboo—"Hulk."

Expensive flop

His mistake was trying to do too much with the story's thin material. Instead of concentrating on effectively and imaginatively turning the comic strip into a fantasy action sizzler, the overly ambitious director wanted to add another dimension to the story by digging into the superhero's childhood secrets and anger issues. The result: The excessively ponderous film was a dud and an expensive flop.

The good thing was, Lee took his monumental failure like a man, paid his dues, learned his lessons—and, when "Brokeback Mountain" came out, was back in top form again.

For his part, **Clint Eastwood** was winning raves for his astute handling of movies like "Bird" and "Sudden Impact," until he megged "The Rookie" with Charlie Sheen in 1990.

Critics found the film "overlong, sadistic and stale even by the conventions of the buddy pic genre" (Variety), so Eastwood had to lick his wounds. Not to worry, though, he was soon back in top form with "The Unforgiven," which won him his first Oscar for Best Director.

Even the iconic **Steven Spielberg** had to eat humble pie after he directed "1941." Conceptualized as a slick and edgy comedy, the film purported to tell the story of a fictive Japanese attack on Los Angeles in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.

Clumsy stinker

It seemed like a good idea, because Spielberg appeared to be incapable of doing anything wrong, after such halcyon hits as "Jaws" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind."

Alas, "1941" turned out be a clumsy stinker, prompting **Vincent Conby** of the New York Times to grouse, "I've seldom seen a comedy more ineptly timed. It's less comic than cumbersome!"

The film's feature made Spielberg reevaluate his career, and he soon recovered nicely with "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Francis Ford Coppola's direction of the "Godfather" movies was critically acclaimed, but his work on "Jack" in 1996 failed to pass muster. He conceptualized the film as a star turn for **Robin Williams**, who would play a 10-year-old who aged four times faster than usual.

But the movie's tone turned out to be all wrong, eliciting this caustic remark from **Owen Gleiberman** of Entertainment Weekly: "It's hard to shake the feeling that Coppola has become a hack in an artist's body!"

That hurt, but Coppola has bounced back with his new romantic fantasy, "Youth Without Youth."

Finally, **Oliver Stone** won his first Best Director Oscar for 1987's "Platoon." Three years later, he won again for "Born on the Fourth of July."

And then came "Alexander" (2004). A film about Alexander the Great was deemed a great idea, especially after another period epic, "Gladiator," had turned out to be a critical and popular hit.

Unfortunately, "Alexander" came off as too psychologically turgid and visually tepid, eliciting scathing reviews from **David Awen** ("Sometimes stunning, ultimately stupefying epic") and **Peter Travers** ("A pokey tale").

Happily, after the critical drubbing, Stone returned to form with last year's "World Trade Center!"

Summer release

Bookware Publishing is releasing the following titles: "Mischievous Fate," "Be My Groom," "All For Love," "Agent of My Heart" and "When Dreams Come True." Aspiring writers are also invited to submit manuscripts for evaluation. Call 631-8894.

TRY A LI'L TORTURE Joaquin Phoenix (L) and Eva Mendes arrive for a gala screening of James Gray's film "We Own The Night" at the 60th Cannes Film Festival on Friday. What did it take to bag an Oscar nomination, the actor, who got a nod for "Walk the Line," was asked. He recommended a little "torture" to the soul. REUTERS

When jokes ...

From page E6

acters that Charming rallies, add some darkness and texture to the palette, but they don't figure in too many scenes and feel underused, overall. It still goes to show that no matter how technically competent the computer-rendered visuals are, story and characterization will always be paramount.

But it's hip

Still, the "Shrek" series is quite unique in that each of the movies isn't the run-of-the-mill animated feature that overpreaches and is kid-exclusive. Which isn't to say that it's mature or anything; it's just hip and somewhat in touch with pop culture. Versions of "I've Been to Paradise," "Live and Let Die," and "Cats in the Cradle" manage to sneak into the script, to some positive effect.

Slightly faded

"Shrek the Third" tries to move the characters forward, but most of them are slightly faded versions of themselves. Fiona's development as an expectant mom is cutely handled, but Arthur's drama, Shrek's imagined parenting blues and consequently, the dud showdown with the kingdom's exiled enemies don't really make for anything memorable or fun.

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12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00
3 SHREK 3
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
4 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
1:25 4:35 7:45
5 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
6 FRACTURE
12:40 2:40 4:40
7 MESSAGE from HEAVEN
12:10 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:30
8 IndieSine: BALIW
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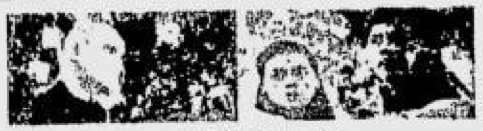

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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
4 FRACTURE 12:35 3:00
WHISPER 5:10 7:30 10:00
5 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
11:10 2:35 6:00 9:25
6 SHREK 3
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
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3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
11:00 1:35 4:10 6:45 9:20
5 FRACTURE 12:30 2:45
WHISPER 5:10 7:00 9:00
6 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
3:10 6:20
7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
12.00 3:10 6:20 9:30
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12:40 3:20 6:00 8:40
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12:40 / 3:50 / 7:00
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3
11:30 / 2:40 / 5:50 / 9:00
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ROUNDUP

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Creator-writer Tim Kring presents "Heroes," an epic drama that chronicles the lives of ordinary people who possess extraordinary abilities.

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The story follows a total eclipse that casts its shadow across the globe, with genetics professor Mohinder Suresh (Sendhil Ramamurthy) in India being led by his father's disappearance to uncover a secret theory—that there are people with super powers.

'Wowowee' surprise

Eight-year-old Rica Mae, whose idea of sheer pleasure is having a meal at Jollibee, got her wish when her mother recently won a contest on the ABS-CBN noontime show "Wowowee."

A few days after the show, mother and daughter were brought to Jollibee-Quezon Avenue for a full-blown Jollibee birthday party, complete with balloons, party favors, Jollibee mascot and all the Chickenjoy, Jolly spaghetti and sundae Rica Maë and her guests could take.

Rica Mae also had Jollibee celebrity endorser Sarah Geronimo, her idol, as well as Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson as a special guests.

RICA Mae with Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson

'Iraq's Kill Zone'

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"Insider: Iraq's Kill Zone" examines the grim reality of private security contractors in Iraq at 4 p.m. today on the National Geographic Channel.

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2	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3	12:40, 4:10, 7:50, 11:30	G
3	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3	12:00, 3:30, 7:10, 10:50	G
4	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3	11:30, 2:50, 6:30, 10:10	G

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②	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 (GP)	1:00, 4 20, 7:40
③	SHREK 3 (GP)	11:30, 1:30, 3:30 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
④	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 (GP)	2:00, 5:20, 8:40
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PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 11:50,3:10,6:30,9:50	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 12:50,3:50,6:50,9:50	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 12:40,4:00,7:20,10:40

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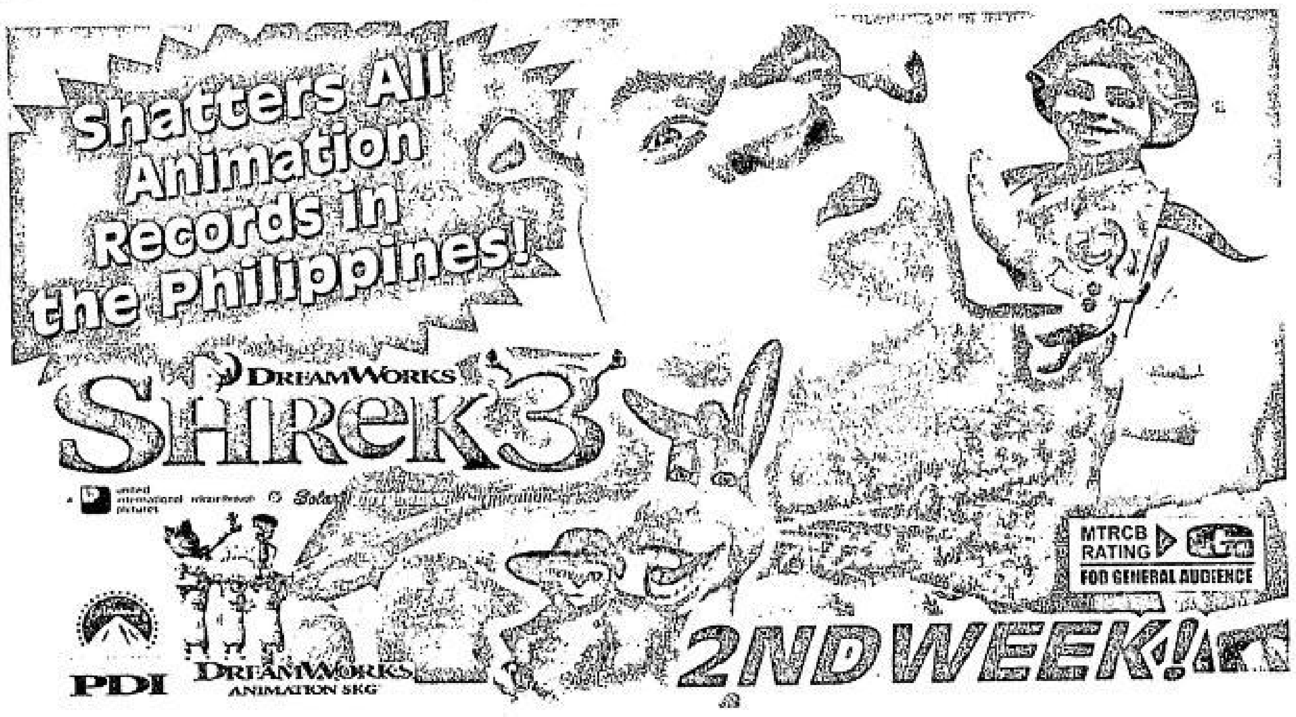
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	3 SHREK 3	4 SHREK 3	5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	
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	3 SPIDER-MAN 3	4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	

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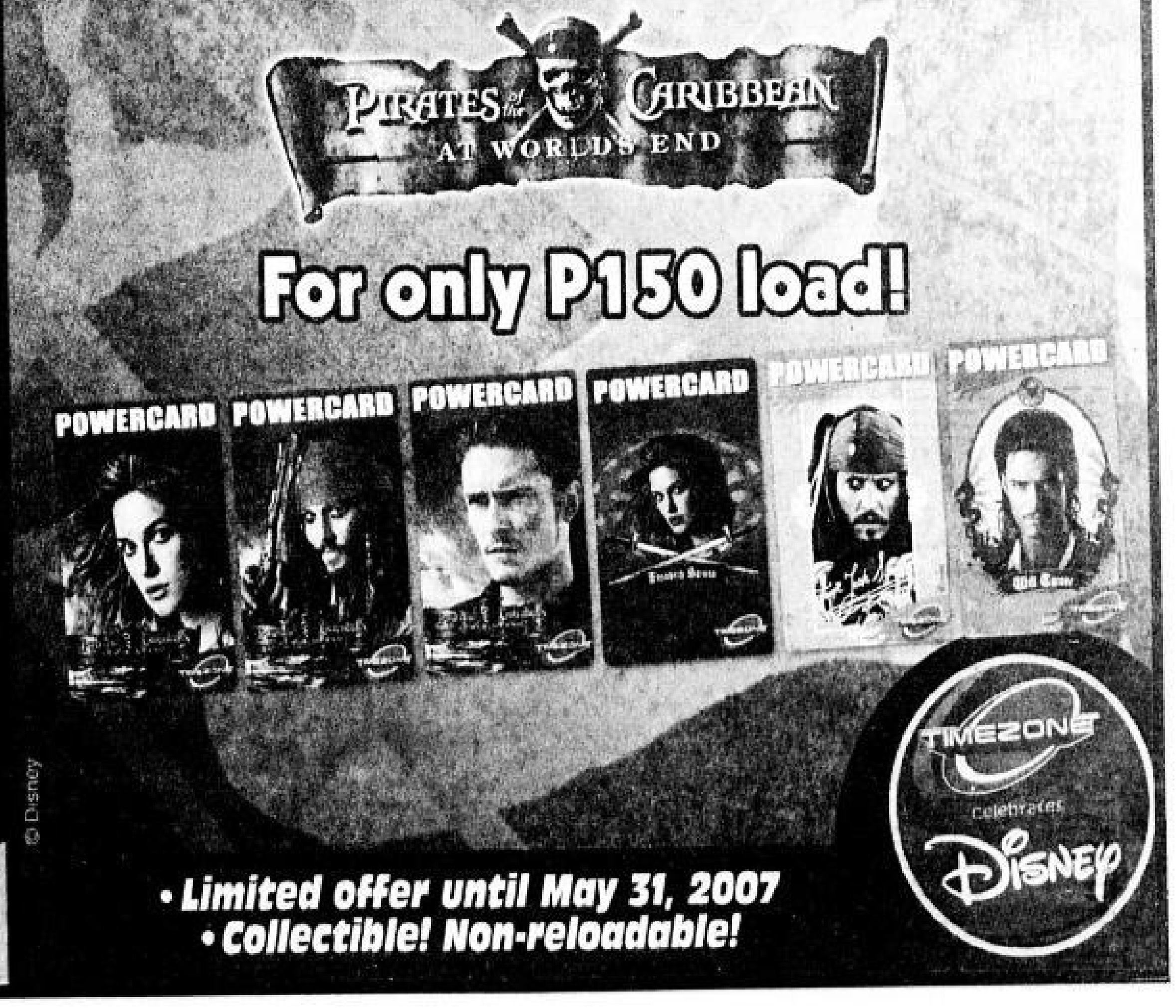
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Rock legends reunite

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

THERE'S A TIE THAT BINDS JOEY "Pepe" Smith and Chickoy Pura: Jun Lopito.

When the Juan de la Cruz (JDLC) band broke up in the mid-1970s, Pepe formed Joey Smith and the Airwaves with Jun as lead guitarist. By 1979, Jun had another band, The Jerks, with Chickoy as lead vocalist.

Wednesday night at the Atrium of SM Megamall, the three Pinoy rock pioneers played together before a crowd of young and old music fans watching from the ground and upper floors. The event, "Mega Music Fest," also featured other musicians jamming on different instruments provided by JB Music.

Pepe, Jun and Chickoy were recently tapped as endorsers of the Filipino music store's Fernando brand of guitars.

Pepe, who began his career as a drummer, played the guitar when he went on his own after JDLC. Chickoy is no stranger to guitar strings, either, having started as a folk singer before joining the Jerks. At the Megamall show, Jun looked very happy trading riffs with his old band mates.

TOP PHOTO: Jun Lopito, left, and Chickoy Pura; above, Pepe Smith. Bound by music, who cares how old these Pinoy rock icons are?

'70s classics

Their performance, billed as "Pinoy Guitar Legends," opened with three '70s classics: "Mamasyal sa Pilipinas," "Beep Beep" and "Himig Natin"—all of which Pepe wrote with JDLC. While Jun and Chickoy cranked up the rhythm and lead lines, Pepe as usual played around with the lyrics of "Mamasyal": *"Ako'y naghihintay ng masasakyan sa highway/Ngunit kanina pa 'ko naghihintay, wala pala 'kong pamasahe…"*

Chickoy had his turn with the jazz-inflected "Kun' Di Man," a song he wrote a long time ago. Jun picked Eric Clapton's "Crossroads," which showcased his love for the blues.

In each of those numbers, Jun and Chickoy exhibited ease and control over their instruments. Jun often called the shots, signaling with a nod or a wink on who would play lead. Chickoy was caught smiling with each signal.

Pepe allowed spontaneity to flavor his act, tinkering with loose chords that would have sounded off-key were it not for the solid backup of Jun and Chickoy.

Barely had their version of "Crossroads" started when a bald-headed Caucasian began jamming with crisp-sounding lead chords. He was Christophe Godin, a French musician invited by JB Music to conduct a guitar clinic.

The set ended with Pepe leading the group with a cover of "Little Red Rooster," in which he played slide guitar.

Age doesn't matter

As fans approached them for autographs, the INQUIRER asked Pepe, Jun and Chickoy what they thought of their new Fernandos.

Pepe: "I like it, although I'm still exploring ... what it can do."

Jun: "*Magaan siya*… plus, it's cheap!"

Chickoy: "*Praktikal para sa* Pinoy musician."

Pepe, turning 60 this year, is as skinny as ever and heavily creased in the face. But years of living in the fast lane have obviously not slowed him down. He still moves onstage like the truant schoolboy that he was when the rock music bug bit him.

Jun, whose former rooster-cut long hair a la Ron Wood is now cropped short and graying, already sports a little paunch. "But I'm 48!" he blurted, and then howled with laughter.

Asked how old *he* was, Chickoy hesitated before answering, "*Kasing-tanda ko lang si* Jun." To which Jun quipped: "*Mas matanda sa 'kin yan*, hahaha!"

But age hardly seems to matter to them when these guys are playing their music.

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Harder To Breathe	MONO HARD2BREATHE	POLY HARD2BREATHE	TRUE HARD2BREATHE	MYTUNE HARD2BREATHE
Sunday Morning	MONO SUNDAYMORN	POLY SUNDAYMORN	TRUE SUNDAYMORN1	MYTUNE SUNDAYMORN
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Chasing Cars	Snow Patrol	TRUE CHASINCARS	MYTUNE CHASINCARS
If I Were You	Hoobastank	TRUE IFIWRU	–
You and Me	Lifehouse	TRUE YOUNME	–
Smile Like You Mean It	The Killers	TRUE SMILE	–
Let Me Go	3 Doors Down	–	MYTUNE LETMEGO
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Bright Idea	Orson	–	MYTUNE BRIGHTIDEA

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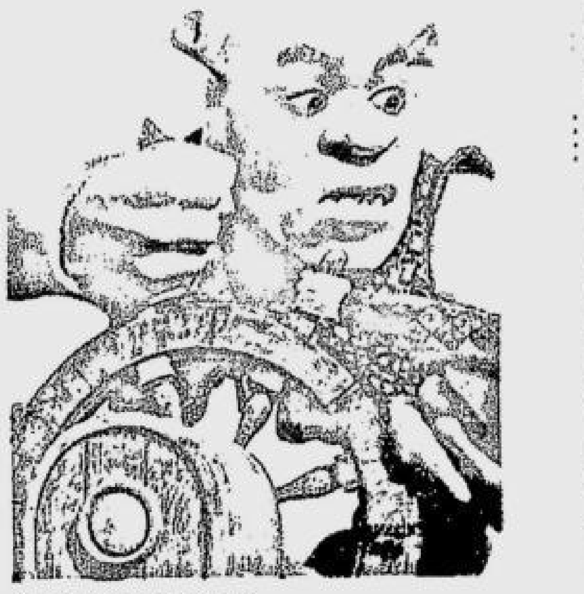

"SHREK THE THIRD"

When jokes are rehashed

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REVIEW

THE FIRST TWO INSTALLMENTS OF "Shrek" were entertaining because they knew how to make use of contemporary, semi-juvenile humor, however sporadically.

"Shrek the Third" doesn't have as much command of its bodily-function jokes as its predecessors, and the viewer feels the novelty has expired because the same old misfit underdog comedy is simply rehashed.

Not that there aren't new things to chuckle at here. Noble ogre Shrek (voiced by Mike Myers), and his sidekicks Puss 'n Boots (Antonio Banderas) and Donkey (Eddie Murphy) must find and protect a new underdog, young Arthur (Justin Timberlake), long-lost heir to the throne.

Weighed down

That's not the only potential misadventure: Shrek and ogress wife Fiona (Cameron Diaz) are faced with parenthood, and only one of them is happy about it.

Other characters get to shine, especially in the cool "girl power" sequences where Fiona and her fairy tale posse (Amy Poehler as Snow White, Cheri Oteri as Sleeping Beauty, Amy Sedaris as Cinderella, etc.) try to reclaim the royal palace from the clutches of their old enemy, Charming (Rupert Everett), and his tragic storybook minions.

Well, that's about it. Too bad some specific parts weigh it down: Shrek doesn't like the idea of becoming a dad, as he believes ogre babies aren't as easy to rear as human children. So we get a long, unfunny nightmare scene, where the anxious daddy-to-be is deluged by a sea of ogre toddlers.

Humor-free

It gets doubly tiring when he carries these fears into the waking world. The nerdy kid, Arthur, spouts a similarly humor-free diatribe against his schoolmate tormentors when he discovers his true lineage. Also, the Shrek-Donkey-Puss dynamic isn't as funny as it used to be, even when the sidekicks are magically, temporarily, body-switched.

The animation is as vivid and tangible as ever but there's really nothing new or amazing about it. The designs are still typically simple, but that's amplified by the animation, anyway, so facial expressions and movements still look smooth, for the most part.

The fairy tale villains, a new roster of char-

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